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Sayyid Ahmad:

A Study of the Religious

Reform Movement of Sayyid Ahmad of Rā'ē Barēli

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analytical study of the Religious Reform Movement(1818-1821 A.D.) of Sayyid Ahmad(1786-1831). In this work at first attempt has been made to remove the misconception created by the Indo-Pakistani Muslim nationalists about Sayyid Ahmad's role in the Indian Muslim politics. They contend that from the beginning of his movement, Sayyid Ahmad tried to vindicate the cause of Muslim political nationalism during the period mentioned above, and organize a holy war against the non-Muslim rulers to liberate the country. This contention does not seem to have any historical bearing.

Secondly, in this work attention has been drawn to the contribution made by Sayyid Ahmad to the socio-religious life of the Indian Muslims in the early nineteenth century through a reformed Sūfism which he called the Tarīqah'-Muhammadiyah.

SAYYID AHMAD :
A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS REFORM
MOVEMENT OF SAYYID AHMAD OF RĀ'Ē BARĒLĪ

by

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PREFACE

This work is an attempt to study the Religious Reform Movement of Sayyid Ahmad of Rā'ē Barēlī, which he executed between the years 1818-1821 A.D. He is popularly known as Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd for his militant movement (1824-1831 A.D.) in the course of which he achieved the honour of martyrdom. His shahādat in the battlefield made him so popular in Indian Muslim quarters that many Muslims have written about him in the last century. In the present century, in the wake of nationalism in the Indian sub-continent, Sayyid Ahmad's militant movement received extraordinarily popular treatment by Muslim nationalist writers who have produced a number of books and articles on the significance of Sayyid Ahmad's militant movement.

The political significance of his militant movement has received such emphasis in the writings of the Muslim nationalists of India and Pakistan that this has overshadowed the real importance of his religious reform movement.

The present work, therefore, aims at studying the real significance of Sayyid Ahmad's Ṣūfī-religious reform movement, which has not yet been treated properly. In

completing this thesis, I tried to base my study primarily on the sayings of Sayyid Ahmad as recorded in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, and other contemporary and recent sources as shown in the first chapter. My special endeavour in this work has been to draw attention, from the historical point of view, to the contribution made by Sayyid Ahmad to the socio-religious life of Indian Muslims through a new way of Ṣūfī teaching which he called the Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah; and to refute the contention of the Muslim nationalists that from the beginning of his public life, Sayyid Ahmad tried to champion the cause of Muslim political nationalism in India.

In dating, except in a few cases, I have followed the style practised by the modern scholars in the Islāmic field, that is, the Muslim dates are always given first with the Gregorian dates following after an oblique stroke: thus 1193-1246/1779-1831, 1201-1246/1786-1831; or 1050/1640, 1233/1817 etc.

I have followed the transliteration system devised by the Institute of Islāmic Studies, McGill University.

I would like to express my gratitude to my teachers, fellow students and friends who have helped me in compiling this work. I am especially indebted to Dr. C.J. Adams, Director of the Institute of Islāmic Studies, McGill University, who has not only provided inspiration for this work, but has

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INTRODUCTION

The history of India records the lives and activities of a number of persons who made a concerted effort to preach Islām on Indian soil, and who strove to revive and reform Islām whenever they saw that it was in danger. These men were Şūfīs, saints, rulers and reformers. Sayyid Aḥmad of Rā'ē Barēlī(U.P.) was a Şūfī who endeavoured to reform Islām in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Sayyid Aḥmad(1201—1246/1786—1831) was born and brought up in a Şūfī environment. Afterwards, he received a little education, and spiritual discipline in Delhi. He grew up as a sensitive young Şūfī at a time when the Muslim community in India was passing through a period of crisis and decline— spiritual, political and moral.

A deeply religious man, Sayyid Aḥmad, was disturbed by the historical trends of the period. Having himself witnessed the events taking place, one after another, during that time, he decided to resort to action in order to rescue his co-religionists from danger. Accordingly, he launched a vigorous movement during the years 1818—1831 A. D. On the basis of the nature of his activities, his movement can be studied in two distinct phases.

Between the years 1818—1821, he had been preaching and propagating Islām peacefully among the Muslims as a Şūfī and religious reformer. In this phase he did not show any expressed inclination towards politics. In the year 1821, he left for the Ḥijāz in order to perform the Hajj. He returned to India in 1824, and began preparations for a jihād (holy war) against the Sikhs. From this point his activities began to take on definite political implication. From the available sources, we do not have any evidence to show that during the second phase of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad preached reform.

In the course of one of his wars against the Sikhs in the then Frontier Region of India (now the north-west Frontier of West Pakistan), he was killed, along with many of his followers in the battlefield of Balakot in 1831. Since that time he had been known popularly as Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd (the martyr).

The present work aims at a study of the first phase of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement (1818—1821), which we propose to call his "Religious Reform Movement". The reason for our study of the first phase of the movement is in order to investigate the validity of the Muslim nationalist writers' contention that from the very beginning of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad had only one view in his mind—to wage a jihād against the infidels in order to liberate the country from

them. The nationalists hold that during the first phase of the movement, he, as a deputy of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, perfected himself in military training and collected fighters for the planned holy war. This plan he executed during the second phase of the movement. In doing so, Sayyid Ahmad contributed to the rise of Muslim nationalism in India, as the nationalists hold. And, thus, his movement is regarded as the precursor of all subsequent Muslim movements in India that led to the creation of a Muslim homeland in India— Pakistan.

To examine the truth of this viewpoint of the nationalists, we have to base our investigation on the information provided by Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, the only book containing Sayyid Ahmad's ideas, which was composed and published during the first phase of his movement, and other historical documents relating to this phase. This process will help us to combat the opinion of the nationalists, on the one hand, and to establish the truth from the historical point of view, on the other.

As for the second phase, his jihād against the Sikhs was conditioned by some circumstances which should be studied accordingly.

Although the second phase of the movement(1824—1831) falls outside the jurisdiction of this work, some connected references will be made whenever necessary. Some references will also be made occasionally to the preceding years in order to make events understandable from an historical perspective.

Sayyid Ahmad was a Şūfī. He received acknowledgement of his spiritual eminence from his spiritual preceptor(pīr). During his reforming career people accepted him as an eminent Şūfī and gave him bay'at(oath of spiritual allegiance). In contrast to his spiritual achievement('ilm-i bāṭinī), Sayyid Ahmad did not acquire any high position in the field of external or worldly education('ilm-i zāhirī). He was not a theologian. He talked very little about theological problems, and did not concern himself with legal points, as we shall see in the following pages. He was primarily a Şūfī and when he talked about religious problems, he used Şūfī terminology and phrases to express himself. His place in religious matters was within a Şūfī world, and as such he dealt with religious problems with a Şūfī outlook. His ideas and teachings were simple and straightforward. He put emphasis on the practical aspect of socio-religious life rather than on the theoretical aspect. In his teaching, he admonished the Muslims to live a life which was in complete conformity with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and to believe in the absolute unity of God, which entailed total and immediate rejection of all innovations and superstitious practices. He named his way of teaching Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah, which may be regarded as a reformed or neo-Şūfīsm, but not a regular Şūfī order. This tarīqah or the way of teaching bore considerable significance even for the later Muslim reformers as we shall see subsequently.

To make a study of Sayyid Ahmad, we face the problem of material. Sayyid Ahmad did not leave any book written by himself. There is only one book, namely, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, which contains his ideas and teachings. In addition, we have a considerable amount of material which is helpful, but the vast majority of these sources were written long after the death of Sayyid Ahmad. The literature produced by his disciples (murīds) reflects their relationship with their spiritual preceptor (murshid). The books written in the present century, are too far removed from Sayyid Ahmad's life and time, reflect the attitude of authors in a changed situation. We have to be careful when relying on these sources.

In chapter one we propose to make a survey of the sources at our disposal, although we shall not discuss all of the material in detail. This survey will enable us to judge the authenticity and validity of information which these sources provide. In order to judge the authenticity of these sources, we shall examine them against the sayings of Sayyid Ahmad recorded in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, and compare them with other historical documents, such as the writings of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and the history of Anglo-Muslim relationship in early nineteenth-century India. This method, it is hoped, will enable us to have a balanced and true picture of Sayyid Ahmad's life and activities. This survey will further help us to see what problem these sources create for us in reconstructing the life of Sayyid Ahmad and his movement.

CHAP. I

SOURCES

Although there are many sources for the life and thought of Sayyid Aḥmad, each of these, by its very nature, raises problems for us in reconstructing his movement. A critical survey of these sources from the historical point of view will help us to find out the true nature and significance of his movement.

I

Before we enter into a discussion of the biographical type of literature, it seems necessary to make a brief survey of the books written by Shāh Ismā‘īl. His works are not biographical; they rather contain the teachings and thoughts of Sayyid Aḥmad. A study of Sayyid Aḥmad's ideas will enable us, first of all, to locate his position in Indian Islām; then to determine the nature of his movement (whether political nationalism or religious reform), which he launched on the basis of those ideas. Shāh Ismā‘īl was the most important personality of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement, who collected the latter's sayings.

Mawlānā Muḥammad Ismā‘īl (1193—1246/1779—1831), a

member of the house of Shāh Waliyullāh, was one of the earliest disciples of Sayyid Aḥmad. From the time of his bay'at to Sayyid Aḥmad, he was the closest disciple and friend of Sayyid Aḥmad; and was the most influential person in Sayyid Aḥmad's¹ movement. Dr. M.A. Bārī remarks of him: "By far the most fiery and brilliant exponent of the reform was Shāh Muḥammad Ismā'īl ..., of whom an impartial observer wrote in 1853: 'During the present century, India has not produced another man similarly enterprising and able'²". Before meeting Sayyid Aḥmad, Shāh Ismā'īl had set in motion at Delhi a social and religious upheaval by attacking the superstitious practices among the Muslims. Afterwards, he became Sayyid Aḥmad's disciple and continued his struggle against the same evils.

Muḥammad Ismā'īl is credited with having written as many as eleven books,³ Sirāt-i Mustaqīm⁴ being the most important one so far as the movement of Sayyid Aḥmad is concerned. W.W. Hunter calls it "the Qur'ān of the Wahhābi movement."⁵ The significance of the book is attested to by this designation.

Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is a record of what Sayyid Aḥmad said on various subjects on different occasions. Shāh Ismā'īl informs us in the introduction to the book that although it was not possible to record the exact words of Sayyid Aḥmad (his zubān), the book was written under the immediate supervision of Sayyid Aḥmad (he did not dictate it). Ismā'īl adds that since the person of Sayyid Aḥmad, with all qualities,

was created from the very beginning in complete resemblance to the Prophet, his mind was unacquainted with the customary science and technicalities or the methodology of the scholars of written knowledge. Therefore, to render the ideas intelligible to general readers, Sayyid Aḥmad's sayings and lessons have not been given exactly as he uttered them, but have been explained and arranged (by Ismā'īl) in accordance with the generally accepted rules of composition. In some places alterations and changes have been made in order to pattern the language and form after the tradition of other writers, particularly Shāh Walīyullāh.⁶

From this statement of Shāh Ismā'īl at least two points emerge. Firstly, it is clear that the words of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm are not the exact words of Sayyid Aḥmad, and, naturally, we do not know what these were. None the less, it is accepted that this treatise contains Sayyid Aḥmad's ideas, though not in his own words. Secondly, Ismā'īl has likened Sayyid Aḥmad's nature to that of the Prophet. This is important for us in the sense that many Ṣūfīs and their disciples had made such claims before; Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī can be cited as an example in the Indian context.⁷ This attitude of Shāh Ismā'īl and many others towards Sayyid Aḥmad tells us something about the position of Sayyid Aḥmad in the history of Muslim India.

At the beginning of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm the author mentions, "The result(thamarah) of sharī'at and ṭarīqat and the basis

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of ḥaqīqat and maʿrifat are the love for God."

This use of Ṣūfī terminology and types of thought by Sayyid Aḥmad to express his religious ideas is vitally important for us, because it locates his place in the fold of Indian Ṣūfism, on the one hand, and indicates the Ṣūfī nature of his movement, on the other hand.

Proceeding farther, Shāh Ismāʿīl discusses the states (aḥwāl), stages(maqāmāt) and results(natāʾij and thamārāt) of Ḥubb-i ʾImānī. Here he clearly distinguishes between the mystical type of religious life—Ḥubb-i ʾIshqī, the "Loving Love"(Love for the sake of Love)— and the prophetic type in which the Ḥubb-i ʾImānī, the "Faith Love"(Love on account of the faith) is the axis.

As he proceeds in his discussion of Ḥubb-i ʾImānī and Ḥubb-i ʾIshqī, Shāh Ismāʿīl says that because Ḥubb-i ʾImānī and its 'states', 'stages', and 'results' and 'fruits' eventuate in Nabuwat, this ṭarīq(way) is called Rāh-i Nabuwat (the way of the Prophethood); and because Ḥubb-i ʾIshqī and its 'states', 'stages', and 'results' and 'fruits' eventuate in maʿrifat(knowledge), which is the khulāṣah(substance) of Wilāyat(sainthood), this ṭarīq is called Rāh-i Wilāyat(the way of Sainthood). Shāh Ismāʿīl also presents a distinction between Rāh-i Nabuwat and Rāh-i Wilāyat which we shall discuss later.

In the exposition of Hubb-i Īmānī, Shāh Ismā'īl draws our attention to some points which are quite significant for our study. He says that one of the excellent supports of Hubb-i Īmānī is the adoption of a strong determination to obey the sharī'at and an earnest eagerness to conform to the ¹¹ Sunnah and to avoid innovations completely. In another place Shāh Ismā'īl says that the revival of the Sunnah was another ¹² great support of Hubb-i Īmānī.

These points tell us how much Sayyid Aḥmad was imbued with Ṣūfī ideas. Although he is eager to see the sharī'ah fully implemented, innovations strictly avoided and conformity with the Sunnah faithfully maintained, he advocates this position from the Ṣūfī point of view. An emphasis on the revival of the Sunnah is an indication of the fact that the Ṣūfīs consider ¹³ the Prophet's practices(sunnah) as a model for their life. The description of Ṣūfī ideas and thought by Sayyid Aḥmad not only helps us to locate his position among the Indian Ṣūfīs, it also enables us to see the Ṣūfī nature of his reform movement.

The second chapter of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is particularly important as far as the reform programme of Sayyid Aḥmad is concerned. In this chapter, he discusses the various kinds of religious innovations(bid'āt), which includes the customs and practices that have crept into Muslim life from Hindu influence. He also criticises the Shī'ah practices. He further deals with religious and moral duties and observances, the

exercise of which prepares the devotee for spiritual contemplation. S.M. Ikrām calls this chapter "the heart of the book" ¹⁴ from the view point of reform."

It is important to note that throughout Sirāt-i Mustaqīm Sayyid Aḥmad deals with the matters relating to Ṣūfism. The second chapter, for example, although primarily devoted to the problems of reform, as we have indicated above, begins with a discussion of some Ṣūfī ritualistic practices such as liturgies(adhkār), spiritual service(shughl), and silent devotion(murāqabah) and mystic stage(maqām). ¹⁵

In the third chapter Sayyid Aḥmad concerns himself in explaining the modes of contemplation(ṭarīq-i sulūk) for attaining the perfection of the "way of Sainthood"(Rāh-i Wilāyat), with reference to the peculiarities and disciplines(ashghāl, adhkār, murāqabāt, maʿrifat, kashf, latāʿif etc.) of each of the four important Ṣūfī orders prevalent in India at that time, namely, Qādiriyyah, Chishtīyah, Naqshbandīyah and Mujaddadīyah. ¹⁶

It is important for our study of Sayyid Aḥmad's life and thought to answer why should he be interested in Ṣūfī orders? The answer is not difficult to find. Firstly, Sayyid Aḥmad's deep concern over the Ṣūfī orders is an indication of his affiliation with these four Ṣūfī ṭurūq. Secondly, his exposition on the disciplines of these Ṣūfī orders is indicative of his intention of bringing to light afresh the practices of the orthodox Ṣūfī orders in contrast to those introduced by the

heretic or bī-shar'¹⁷ Ṣūfīs.

Again, in the fourth chapter Sayyid Aḥmad describes the processes of acquiring the excellences of the "way of Prophethood" (Rāh-i Nabuwat), such as repentance (tawbah), silent devotion (murāqabah) and remembrance of faith (dhikr-i imānī).¹⁸

Finally, the conclusion (khātimah) of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is very important for our purpose. It sets forth the wonders experienced by Sayyid Aḥmad in course of his participation in the ṭarīq-i sulūk-i nabuwat and ṭarīq-i sulūk-i wilāyat. Here Shāh Ismā'īl once again asserts that the excellences of Ṭarīq-i Nabuwat were exemplified in full in the character of Sayyid Aḥmad from the very beginning, and describes Sayyid Aḥmad's inclination towards following the Sunnat, his avoidance of innovation, his respect for shar' and his aversion for sins,¹⁹ as the signs of his excellences. Then he proceeds to say that the stages (maqāmāt) for reaching the Ṭarīq-i Wilāyat also became clear to him. When this happened Sayyid Aḥmad once dreamt of the Prophet who fed him three dates by his holy hand. Later he dreamt of 'Alī and Fāṭimah. 'Alī gave him a bath with his own hand and then Fāṭimah put on him the very best²⁰ dress. This dream indicated to the fullest manifestation of the excellences of Ṭarīq-i Nabuwat in the person of Sayyid Aḥmad, and God's grace ('ināyat-i Rahmānī) and God's care (tarbiyat-i Rabbānī) became directly responsible for him, until one day, God held Sayyid Aḥmad's hand and said (in a dream)

"I have given you a very precious thing and shall give you
²¹
 many more things."

This kind of description, however, creates problem for non-Şūfis. It may appear to them a merely laudatory, impossible and even fantastic way of expression. For example, one writer has remarked: "The above description of Sayyid Aḥmad's reaching the perfection to the Tarīq-i Wilāyat and Nabuwat is a sufficient specimen of the extravagances of
²²
 enthusiasm or imposture which pervade the book." But the point we wish to make here is that this kind of description is in the best Şūfī tradition. The attainment of these turūq is the final stage in the spiritual journey leading to divine knowledge in the Şūfī tradition.

Before we conclude our survey, it may be useful to add some remarks about Sirāt-i Mustaqīm. "Its professed purpose is, kindly to impart to the world the benefits of the experience and inspired discoveries of a saint so eminent as Sayed Aḥmad was proclaimed to be, in those modes of religious exercise which are believed by the most orthodox Muḥammedans to have an influence in purifying and strengthening the higher orders of human minds, which enables them, even in life, to attain to a knowledge of the 'hidden' meaning and essence of the institutes of their faith, to an intimate communion with the immediate presence of the Divinity, and to the most exalted state of spiritual dignity and power.

The whole book is written in a strain of what may appropriately be called orthodox Ṣūfism. Touching but little on the metaphysical subtleties of the Ṣūfī opinion, ... it is still devoted to an exposition of many of the admitted Ṣūfī tenets and practices, and is full of technicalities of Ṣūfī phraseology. It makes reference, especially, in its explanations and allusions, to the peculiar divisions which prevailed in India, among those who aspire to the honours of religious initiation... Sirāt-ul-Mustaqīm discloses little or nothing of the designs which Sayed Aḥmad and his party entertained of stirring up a war of religious fanaticism against the infidels of India, though it breaths, in treating of the duty of religious war (we shall discuss Sayyid Aḥmad's view of jihād later), a sigh of pious regret over the darkness which had²³ in these days (1233/1817) overspread the land..."

Another writer has observed recently: "It becomes apparent from this book [Sirāt-i Mustaqīm] that they did not base their movement only on theological arguments as to what was right and what was wrong, what was enjoined and what was forbidden by the sharīʿah; they were also mystics inspired²⁴ by other values."

From the description of the subject-matter of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, we can see that the book is written in the line of the Ṣūfī tradition, and that it contains many ideas relating to Ṣūfī theosophy. Since the movement initiated by Sayyid Aḥmad was based on these ideas and thoughts, it may be called

a Ṣūfī reform movement. The striking point to note here is that there is no reference to any political thinking of Sayyid Aḥmad.

The next important treatise, written by Shāh Ismā‘īl, particularly relevant to the reform programme of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement is Taqwīyat-ul-‘Imān (Support of the Faith or Strengthening of the Faith)²⁵. A brief discussion of the subject-matter of this treatise will show what Sayyid Aḥmad wanted to reform of Muslim life and for which cause he strove.

The first part of Taqwīyat-ul-‘Imān begins with a discussion on tawḥīd (unity of God), and shirk (idolatry). After discussing the excellences of tawḥīd and evils of shirk, Shāh Ismā‘īl classifies the latter into many categories, such as shirk in the knowledge (‘ilm) of God; in the power (taṣarruf) of God; in worship (‘ibādat) and in habits (shirk fī al-‘ādāt).²⁶ Classification of shirk into many kinds by Shāh Ismā‘īl is an indication of the fact that it can be diffused into Muslim life in various forms. In one place in Taqwīyat-ul-‘Imān he says:

It is customary for many people, in the time of difficulty, to invoke the spirits of pīr, apostles, imāms, martyrs and angels, and fairies, and to beg them to fulfil their wishes. To propitiate them, vows and offerings are made in their names. Moreover, children are named after them, for instance, ‘Abdun Nabī (slave of apostle), ‘Alī Bakhsh (gift of ‘Alī) as well as Hasan Bakhsh, Husayn Bakhsh, Madār Bakhsh, Sālār Bakhsh and also Ghulām Muḥīy-ud-Dīn (slave of the Reviver of the Faith). And

for the life protection of their children some keep a lock of hair on their heads, and other make them wear a woven thread around their necks and clothe them in the name of some saints. Some people put chains on the leg of their children, and some offer sacrifices. Many of them invoke the saints in the time of difficulty and take oaths in their names. In short, what the Hindus do towards their idols, these pseudo-Muslims do all these things with prophets, saints, imāms, martyrs, angels and fairies, and yet they claim that they themselves are Musalmāns.²⁷

The second part of Taqwīyat-ul-Īmān is called
²⁸
Tadhkīr-ul-Ikhwān. This part is fully devoted to a description of the benefits of following the Sunnat and evils of innovations.

Throughout the treatise, Shāh Ismā'īl forcefully tries to establish the beauty and excellences of the unity of God; and the benefits derived from following the Sunnah and the vices involved in working the innovations, with the help of Qur'ānic verses and the Prophetic Traditions. At the same time, with the help of the same kind of materials he condemns the evils of shirk and shows ways and means to avoid them. He displays a depth of knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Hadīth in describing his chosen subjects.

As we know that Sayyid Aḥmad strove to glorify the "unity of God" and to revive the Sunnah of the Prophet, which entailed in the negative aspect a categorical and total rejection of all innovations and abuses that had crept into Muslim life, the importance of Taqwīyat-ul-Īmān relating to his reform programme can hardly be overestimated. The

works of Shāh Ismā'īl, which were compiled during the life time of Sayyid Aḥmad, and are directly concerned with his ideas, teachings and objectives, are, therefore, most relevant for an understanding of his movement.

II

In this section we wish to make a survey of the literature produced by Sayyid Aḥmad's disciples after his death. These works are of biographical nature. The purpose of this survey is to point out the problems these works create for us.

After the tragedy of Balākot(1831 A.D.) steps were taken, mainly through the generous efforts of Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah, then ruler of the State of Tonk(r.1834—1864) and a devoted disciple of Sayyid Aḥmad,²⁹ to prepare a detailed biography of Sayyid Aḥmad and a connected account of his chequered life among the Pathans of North-West Frontier Region. It is said that Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah called back the close associates of Sayyid Aḥmad, granted them state allowances, rehabilitated them, and engaged them in writing what they knew about Sayyid Aḥmad and his movement. As a result of this munificent effort of the Nawāb, some of the companions and disciples of Sayyid Aḥmad recorded the history of the movement up to the event of Balākot. The works they produced are the following:

1. "Munzurah al-Sa'da fi Ahwāl al-Ghuzah wa-al-Shuhadā", popularly known "Tārikh-i Ahmadiyah"(Persian); by Sayyid Ja'far 'Alī Naqwī, compiled in 1272/1855³⁰.

2. "Waqā'i' Ahmadi"(Urdū), in many volumes MS., comprising of about 3000 pages. The process of compilation is said to have proceeded from information provided by the mujāhidīn who actually took part in the movement as disciples of Sayyid Ahmad. Its compilation was started in 1274 A.H. and the first volume was completed in 1276.

3. Makhzan-i Ahmadi(Persian), by Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī³¹ (Agra, 1299/1882), but now unavailable.

From the above description it is clear that these books were prepared long after the death of Sayyid Ahmad. The relationship of their writers with Sayyid Ahmad is an important factor for our consideration. Their relation with Sayyid Ahmad was that of a pīr with his murīds than that of a military commander with his lieutenants and sepoys. Every murīd tries to treat his pīr as a superhuman. This relationship between Sayyid Ahmad and his disciples is reflected in their writings about him, as we shall see in the following pages.

It may be mentioned here that all the later writers of India and Pakistan about Sayyid Ahmad and his movement, in the vast majority of instances, based their information on these works. We shall see later that these works often give historically untenable and even confusing information. On the

basis of information these works provide us, it is difficult to form an objective picture of Sayyid Aḥmad's life and his movement. We should, therefore, be careful in placing too much reliance on these works.

Another kind of material has come down to us from the pens of those persons who were associated with the mujāhidīn, in one way or the other, after the time of Sayyid Aḥmad. These are poems, written in both Urdū and Persian, and are called Madhiya Nazmīn (poems of praise). These poems seem markedly extravagant, as is usually the case with poetical expression, in praise and glorification of Sayyid Aḥmad. Their main theme is to extol Sayyid Aḥmad as an extraordinary person combining in himself all the qualities of a superhuman like the Prophet and Mahdī. In fact, a certain Sayyid ‘Abd al-Razzāq Ḥasnī Ḥusaynī, an inhabitant of Rā’ē Barēlī (birth place of Sayyid Aḥmad) who later settled in Tonk, went to the extent of saying that the two worlds (dūnūn jahān) are under the feet of Sayyid Aḥmad (unke qadamūn tale).³²

Another enthusiastic poet, named Ḥakim Mū’min, who has written eulogistic poems both in Persian and Urdū, says³³ that Sayyid Aḥmad was the promised Mahdī of the Age.

As we see that these poems of praise endeavoured to invest Sayyid Aḥmad with radiance so much that in fact they have created problems for us to have a true picture of his personality. Sayyid Aḥmad never made any such claim. Moreover,

these poets do not say anything about the teachings and ideas of Sayyid Aḥmad, on the basis of which they could justify their claims.

The first biography of Sayyid Aḥmad in Urdū was written by Mawlawī Muḥammad Ja‘far Thānēsarī(d.1905), who came to be closely attached to the movement of Sayyid Aḥmad after his death.³⁴ This book is named Tawārīkh ‘Ajībāh mawsūm bih Sawānīh Aḥmadī was first published in Delhi(1309/1891), and went through several editions.

This book deals with both political and religious aspects of Sayyid Aḥmad's life and his movement. Mihr bitterly criticises this book for its having adopted a pro-British attitude on behalf of Sayyid Aḥmad and for having introduced the idea of Sayyid Aḥmad's disappearance (ghybat) from the battlefield of Balākot.³⁵

Keeping aside the political aspect of Thānēsarī's statements about Sayyid Aḥmad, which we shall discuss later, let us briefly consider some of his statements about the personality of Sayyid Aḥmad which have spiritual significance.

Thānēsarī presents Sayyid Aḥmad as one who possesses supernatural power(ghā‘ibī qudrat) to work miracles. At the beginning of Tawārīkh ‘Ajībāh, Thānēsarī says: "There is a Hadīth in Mishkat where it is narrated that ‘Alī told his son, Ḥasan, that a man would be born from his line(nasal) [Sayyid Aḥmad traced his genealogy back to Ḥasan and ‘Alī],

who would bear the name of his Prophet [Muḥammad or Aḥmad], and who would possess characteristics of the Prophet in his nature; and it would not be improper to call him the thirteenth century [of Islāmic era] regenerator(mujaddid) or middle Mahdī³⁶ (Mahdī wasat)". Obviously, Thānēsari interprets the allegorical Hadīth in favour of Sayyid Aḥmad. Proceeding farther, Thānēsari takes pride in calling Sayyid Aḥmad an illiterate(ummī) because, in this respect he resembled the Prophet who was also ummī.³⁷ Thānēsari believes that Sayyid Aḥmad himself claimed to have³⁸ received divine commands. Of all the miracles Sayyid Aḥmad is reported to have performed and of all the excellences that he is said to have achieved, his alleged mi'rāj(nocturnal journey) to Syria to meet the Qutb-al-Aqtāb, as Thānēsari reports, seems to be one of the most lavish exaltations poured on him³⁹ by his biographers.

We do not wish to cite all the statements of Thānēsari about Sayyid Aḥmad. By instancing a few of them we want to draw attention to the fact that Thānēsari instead of telling us historically tenable facts about the life and movement of Sayyid Aḥmad, he has presented him(Sayyid Aḥmad) in a manner that renders reconstruction of a true picture of Sayyid Aḥmad's life and ideas difficult for us. For example, there is no evidence to show that Sayyid Aḥmad had a mi'rāj to Syria, or he disappeared from the battlefield of Balākot. In short, what Sayyid Aḥmad did not claim, Thānēsari has endeavoured to prove.

The distortion of facts about Sayyid Ahmad on the part of his biographers is the crux of problem we face in forming a reasonably correct picture about his life and the significance of his movement. The purpose of the present work is to present a balanced view of Sayyid Ahmad's contribution to the socio-religious life of Indian Muslims.

III

In this section we shall discuss some of the books written by the Muslim writers of India and Pakistan in the present century about the life and movement of Sayyid Ahmad. The purpose of our discussion is to point out what are the problems these works raise for us about the significance of Sayyid Ahmad's movement.

In the wake of nationalistic movements in India, scholars turned their attention to the past. As a result of this effort, with an attitude reflecting a changed situation, a kind of literature has come into being which may be called "Nationalist Literature". In this literature, the life of Sayyid Ahmad and his movement received a proper share of attention. As a matter of fact, a book has been written in Urdu entitled, Hindustān Kī Pahlī Islāmī Tahrīk (First Islamic Movement of India).⁴⁰

Since the independence of India and Pakistan(1947),

the tendency to be concerned with the past has become much stronger, and scholars, even under government patronage, have been engaged in writing an independent history of the "Freedom Movement". In the History of Freedom Movement, a publication of the Pakistan Historical Society, Sayyid Aḥmad and his⁴¹ movement have received full treatment.

If we go back to the early years of the present century, it will not be difficult to trace the origin of this attitude. It was 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī (1289—1364/1872—1944), a product of the Deoband Seminary, and active member of the Indian National Congress and a fire brand of the Indian Muslim⁴² movements, who first introduced the idea that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz formed a "Central Revolutionary Committee" in order to launch a jihād against the infidels, and Sayyid Aḥmad was⁴³ appointed "Chairman" of this jihād programme. Sindhī consciously or unconsciously managed to ignore the religious movement of Sayyid Aḥmad. From that time, Sayyid Aḥmad has been brought more and more into the political arena of Indian Muslims divorced from the religious field. Mirzā Ḥayrat Dihlawī, for example, in his Hayāt-i Tayyibah, only deals with the jihād movement of Sayyid Aḥmad. This tendency among Muslim nationalist writers of India and Pakistan has reached such a point that Sayyid Aḥmad received the first preference in the discussion of the chapter, "Struggle for National Liberation", in a⁴⁴ recent book, entitled, Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan.

Now Sayyid Ahmad and his movement are regarded primarily as the precursors of all Muslim political movements in India, and any significance of his contribution to religious reform is ignored. Hence Dr. Bari rightly observes: "A new significance is now being attached to the movement insofar as it is being regarded as 'the precursor of the 'Aligarh movement, the Khilāfat movement, the Pan-Islāmic movement and the Pakistan movement which rocked Indian Muslims'⁴⁵".

It may be pointed out that this image of Sayyid Ahmad is a recent development. We shall come across with many instances of a nationalistic attitude towards Sayyid Ahmad. Despite all deviations from and distortions of facts, the nationalists in general agree at least on one point— Sayyid Ahmad was born in a Şūfī family, received spiritual training, and was a Şūfī. But, to a great extent the nationalists have emphasized the political aspect and have depreciated the religious side of Sayyid Ahmad's movement.

There are two late biographers of Sayyid Ahmad, namely, Sayyid Abu'l Hasan 'Alī Nadwī and Ghulām Rasūl Mihr. Both of them seem to be more objective in their approach to the subject than the earlier Urdū writers. Their source of information are mainly those books mentioned above which were produced by the disciples of Sayyid Ahmad. Mihr's book, Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd, which has been commented upon by Dr. W.C. Smith as "a landmark in the Urdū Historiography", is the most detailed

account of Sayyid Ahmad's life and activities. Mihr claims to have personally visited all the places where Sayyid Ahmad passed his days during the second phase of his movement. Mihr also informs us that he contacted persons individually who happened to be related to Sayyid Ahmad, his family and his movement in one way or the another, and that he collected information which they could offer. It is, however, doubtful that Mihr could collect authentic information from individuals whom he contacted about the life of Sayyid Ahmad more than one hundred years after Sayyid Ahmad's death. This is about the second phase of Sayyid Ahmad's movement. As for the first phase, Mihr's sources are those books and treatises written long after the death of Sayyid Ahmad. In his approach to the problem, however, as we shall see subsequently, Mihr puts main emphasis on the political aspect of Sayyid Ahmad's movement.

Among the western writers, it seems that W.W. Hunter is the first and perhaps the only writer who gives a fairly balanced view of Sayyid Ahmad. Although because of his martial activities, Hunter sometimes calls him a "fanatic", "imposter", "prophet" etc., nevertheless, he acknowledges his (Sayyid Ahmad's) religious movement and uses laudable words. In one place, for example, Hunter says:

About 1816 [Sayyid Ahmad] went to study the sacred Law under a Doctor of high repute at Delhi. After a three years' noviciate he started forth as a preacher, and by boldly attacking the abuses which have

crept into the Muhammedan faith in India; obtained a zealous and turbulent following... During 1820 the apostle journeyed slowly southward, his disciples rendering him menial services in acknowledgement of his spiritual dignity, and men of rank and learning running like common servants, with their shoes off, by the side of his palanquin.⁴⁶

In contrast to Hunter's view, we may examine another western writer's opinion. He says, "The leader of Wahhābī movement in India was Sayyid Aḥmad,... whilst at Mecca, attracted the notice of the learned doctors [of religion] by the similarity of his teaching to that of the Wahhābī sectaries, from whom the city had suffered so much. He was soon expelled from the town, and he returned to India a fanatical disciple⁴⁷ of the Wahhābī leader." Apart from distortion of facts (that is, his relation with the Arabian Wahhābīs is not historically proved), we see that this writer had little to say about the first phase of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement.

Summarizing the survey of three kinds of literature available to us, we get the following points:-

(a) The books written by Shāh Ismā‘īl are solely concerned with the ideas and teachings of Sayyid Aḥmad. Those books are faithful records of his thought, on the basis of which he executed his movement. They help us to counter the contention of the nationalists that from the beginning of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad championed the cause of Muslim nationalism in India. On the contrary, they enable us to reconstruct a true nature of his movement. On the basis

of his ideas, as we get from Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm, it is clear that between the years 1818—1821 Sayyid Aḥmad was engaged in Ṣūfī-religious reform activities, not in making preparations for a jihād.

But the books written by Shāh Ismā'īl lack in the social aspect of Sayyid Aḥmad's life. Since they do not provide us with any biographical data on his life, we face the problem of forming a picture of him as far as his relationship to the masses, whom he addressed and among whom he lived and worked.

In short, on the basis of Shāh Ismā'īl's books, although a picture of Sayyid Aḥmad's ideas and thought can be formed, no complete picture of his life and movement can be drawn, particularly if we want to know how far he was successful in his reforming endeavour.

(b) The second category of books, written by Sayyid Aḥmad's disciples long after his death, are simply extravagant in exaltations. They attribute to Sayyid Aḥmad all superhumanly qualities and power and status to which he himself did not lay any claim. Those books, particularly the "poems of praise", lack in historicity of information. They can be regarded more as legendary than historical records.

These books and poems, therefore, can hardly be taken as valid and authentic source of information for reconstructing an historically true image of Sayyid Aḥmad's life and

his movement.

(c) The third category of literature which we call nationalist literature, is primarily concerned with the political aspect of Sayyid Ahmad's movement. The writers of this kind of literature have not only ignored the significance of Sayyid Ahmad's religious reform movement, they have even cleverly twisted the facts relating to Sayyid Ahmad's preparations for launching his religious reform movement. These writers attach undue political importance to the first phase of Sayyid Ahmad's movement, though they cannot present any historical evidence for their contention. The nationalist literature, therefore, can seldom be regarded as representative of the first phase of Sayyid Ahmad's movement. As a matter of fact, this kind of literature raises the real problem for the historians to look into the actual picture of the first phase of Sayyid Ahmad's movement. It is this particular problem that we intend to deal with in the present work.

Considering all the problems created by the existing literature about Sayyid Ahmad's life and movement, the present work aims at presenting a balanced and complete picture of Sayyid Ahmad's life and activities, from the historical point of view, up to the end of the first phase of his movement. The focal point of this work is to call attention to the significant contribution of Sayyid Ahmad to the socio-religious

life of the Indian Muslims in the early nineteenth century, on the other to disprove the nationalist contention as mentioned above.

We have emphasised that Sayyid Ahmad did not play any role in the growth of Muslim nationalism in India. On the contrary, he struggled to eradicate socio-religious abuses from Muslim life. This contention of ours puts us in need to look at a glance at the background against which Sayyid Ahmad struggled. Therefore, in the next chapter we propose to present a brief account of the socio-religious conditions of Muslim India roughly covering the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century. But connected references will be made to the years preceding and following this period. This will, it is hoped, enable us to see the background and the environment in which Sayyid Ahmad lived and worked, and also to appreciate the urgency of his movement.

CHAP. II

BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENT

In this chapter we shall discuss the environment in which Sayyid Aḥmad lived and worked. In discussing the surrounding, we propose to outline the religious and social factors. But we shall limit our discussion only to those socio-religious practices and abuses against which Sayyid Aḥmad launched his reform movement. This discussion, it is hoped, will help us to see the background against which Sayyid Aḥmad struggled and also to understand the real importance of his endeavour. It may be mentioned here that for the analysis of background and environment, we shall base our studies on some secondary sources, and at the end we shall present Luṭfullāh's autobiography as an example taken from a primary source.

I

We shall not discuss the political situation of Sayyid Aḥmad's time in any detail for two reasons. Firstly, this work does not deal with the political aspect or the second phase of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement. Secondly, from Sirāt-i Mustaqīm we do not get any evidence to show that during the first phase of his movement Sayyid Aḥmad indulged in any political thinking. Throughout this treatise only in

one place he makes a reference to the political situation of India. This reference he has made in connection with his discussion of the benefits of jihād (which he seems to have taken in the sense of struggle and active life). He says that jihād was an act of great benefits like rainfall, which brings down heavenly grace upon all people. Then he makes a comparison between Rūm and Tarkestān, and India of 1233 A.H. (1817 A.D.), when most of her parts had become Dār-ul-Harb (land of infidels), in receiving the heavenly blessings. He further says that the "present" situation of India should be compared with the India of two or three hundred years back when heavenly blessings descended on her and she produced ‘ulamā’ and saints.¹

From the above statement of Sayyid Aḥmad, it appears that he considered that India's having become Dār-ul-Harb, she was deprived of all blessings of God. However, this is the only reference to India's political status was made by Sayyid Aḥmad in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm.

We know that the disintegration of Muslim power and fortunes in India was the main theme of eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For a general view of the situation, we may cite the opinion of a learned scholar which, in a way, attests to the view of Sayyid Aḥmad. The scholar remarks:

The disintegration of Muslim order in India is virtually the theme of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. It is easy to observe in the sphere of government and power: the

Marhatta domination of Delhi, 1782—1803, was flanked by the Sikh's supersession of Muslim rule in the Punjab on the one side and by the East India Company's on the other; and in 1799 Tipu Sultān had spectacularly failed in the south to maintain or regain Muslim might. In the economic sphere the passing of the old order and, under the incipient impact of the results of the industrial revolution, its supersession by a new,... and the accompanying dislocation and misery are known. In Muslim education, one can trace in Bengal, at least, the crumbling of a school system economically feudal...2

So deplorable was the general situation of Muslim India of that time over which Sayyid Aḥmad breaths a sigh of regret in Ṣirāṭ-i Mustaqīm. Any book on Indian history, however, can give a full picture of the dying Mughal empire. The Muslims were living politically unprotected and religiously unguided. Sayyid Aḥmad was a man of extraordinary courage and sensitivity, who struggled to bring relief and vitality to Muslim life both in religious and political matters.

II

In this section we shall discuss Ṣūfism in some detail for various reasons. Firstly, Ṣūfī movement was primarily responsible, during its heyday, for spreading Islām in India. Secondly, again, Ṣūfism is regarded instrumental, during its declining period, in diffusing religious corruptions and abuses among the Muslims. Finally, Sayyid Aḥmad condemned the heretic Ṣūfism as the main agency for corrupting Muslim

socio-religious life, and his reform movement was based on Şūfī ideas and thoughts.

The religious life of Muslim India during the period under consideration was in no better condition than the political. As we know that apart from the efforts of the temporal authorities to spread Islām, it was spread in India primarily by the Şūfīs. It was the Şūfīs who took the message of Islām to the remotest corners of the country, and at a personal level the faith of Islām was preached and propagated by them. They obtained most of their converts from among the low-caste Hindus who were considered by the Hindu society as untouchables, and thus were outside the fold of Hindu community. The Şūfī movement was most vigorous and successful particularly in Bengal. Describing the success of Şūfī movement there, a British writer remarks:

But it was not to force that Islām owed its permanent success in Bengal. It [Muslim missionary] appealed to the people and derived the great mass of its converts from the poor. It brought in a higher conception of God, and a nobler idea of the brotherhood of man. It offered to the teeming low castes of Bengal, who had sat for ages abject on the outer most pale of the Hindu community, a free entrance into a new social organization.³

The Şūfīs were individuals, independent of temporal authorities. The rulers did not like to go to the rural areas, because they were the promoters of Muslim civilization which was urban in character. But this did not prevent Muslim

society from taking root in the remote rural areas where Islām was propagated. Thus the Ṣūfī movements set the trend towards the growth of Indo-Islāmic culture.

The Ṣūfī movements were extensive religious movements. Passing through the centuries, eventually there came into existence at least four great Ṣūfī Orders in India, namely, Chishtīyah, Qādrīyah, Naqshbandīyah (its offshoot was Mujaddadiyah, after Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī popularly known as Mujaddad-i Alf-i Thānī) and Suhrawardīyah.

It has been pointed out above that the Ṣūfī movements were vigorous particularly in the rural areas and the Ṣūfīs obtained the vast majority of their converts from among the low-caste poor Hindus by giving them an unrestricted pass to the universal brotherhood of Islām. The liberal attitude of the Ṣūfīs to the question of conversion and converts, left the process of conversion incomplete in the case of most of the new entrants. This is an important point for our study for the fact that when Sayyid Aḥmad started his religious reform movement, he found socio-religious abuses most deep-rooted among these half-converted neo-Muslims. And for this reason, he directed his reform effort towards these people, although not exclusively.

An under current in the Ṣūfī movement was, however, flowing in the opposite direction. Ṣūfism came to India with its Turkish, Iranian and Arab traditions. "No fresh approach

5

to spiritual life was attempted." The great Ṣūfīs did not write any book explaining their teachings. The latitudinarian tendency among the Ṣūfīs opened the gate for the influx of un-Islāmic ideas among the Muslims. Degeneration and corruptions among the Ṣūfī turūq(orders) were clearly visible by the seventeenth century. The decline of Muslim political power in India, however, cannot be regarded as a cause for Ṣūfī decline, because there were some Ṣūfī orders, e.g. Chishtī order, which maintained almost complete aloofness from the temporal authorities, also started experiencing the ebb tide. The degeneration crept into Ṣūfism because the Heads of Ṣūfī silsilah were no longer dynamic enough as spiritual leaders. Thus one writer remarks:

The pīr is no longer an exalted personality guiding the disciples but a magical symbol producing results without any effort on the part of the murīd. If we connect this with the fact that succession to the pīr was becoming hereditary, and sons of shaikhs were assuming the position of successors without realizing that their fathers had undergone spiritual discipline it will be apparent that the khānqāh had become a vested interest, and spiritually, to put it bluntly, was becoming a source of fame and worldly influence, an honourable profession.⁶

The Ṣūfī orders thus began to lose their spiritual vitality, and ideological exclusiveness to maintain their identity as religiously institutionalized organizations. As a result of the chaotic situation in Ṣūfism, beginning from the seventeenth century, as many as fourteen Ṣūfī orders

grew up in India, in addition to the four 'orthodox' orders.⁷
 By orthodox Şūfism, we mean that Şūfism which formulates its
 views from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and insists on conformity
 with the sharī'ah. In this sense, it may also be called⁸
Shar'ī Şūfism as against the unorthodox or bi-Shar'ī Şūfism.

M.T. Titus gives an interesting description of some
 heretic orders which he calls "Irregular orders or Be-Shar'
 orders. He writes:

Some of them were offshoots of the
 original respectable orders. These had
 no appeal to the educated and intellectuals
 but remained confined among the ignorant
 masses. But were widespread. Pīrs were
 often not only ignorant but were 'scoundrels'...
 The ordinary Muslim faqīrs of bazar or village
 belong to this sort of mendicant orders...
 As they go about begging, giving demonstra-
 tions of their ability in magic and
 sleight of hand, telling fortunes,
 writing amulets, and making charms,
 the uninitiated observer is likely to
 assume that all darwishes are like
 these charlatans. Nothing could be
 farther from the truth.⁹

The above statement sufficiently illustrates what
 a dangerous situation was created by the heretic Şūfīs in
 the spiritual life of the Muslim masses of the rural areas.
 In Sirāt-i Mustaqīm Sayyid Aḥmad condemns these heretic Şūfīs¹⁰
 (Şūfī numā mulḥid) in unequivocal terms. He considers these
 corrupt Şūfīs and their organizations as the chief agencies
 through which all un-Islāmic practices from the Hindu society
 found ways into Muslim socio-religious life. This situation
 helps us to understand why Sayyid Aḥmad launched his religious

reform movement through a new way of Şūfī teaching which he called Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah.

We are perhaps devoting too much space to describing Şūfism. This description is important for our study for reasons described at the beginning. But a full picture of Şūfism remains incomplete without a description of it during the late Mughal period, that is, late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

During the late Mughal time, all Şūfī ideals, such as passion for spiritual furtherance, attitude to self-discipline, self-imposed poverty, spiritual guidance to the people etc., receded into the background. Instead, Şūfism grew into a system of practices and beliefs based on certain supernatural assumptions. "There was a shift in emphasis from the ethical to the metaphysical, from the concept of the ideal life as a struggle towards God to the concept of the ideal life as an overflow of the grace of God." ¹¹

The Shaykhs of the Şūfī orders at this time were regarded as mythical personalities more than spiritual guides, and they became objects of veneration to the extent of being abettors in un-Islāmic practices. Their tombs and shrines were objects of reverence; a visit to one of them, such as Ajmeer, was construed as equal to pilgrimage to Mecca. Şūfism was thus losing its exclusiveness in practices and

ideas as against other religious ideas and systems. At this juncture although there may have been some individual Şūfīs who adhered to the sharī'ah, but the vast majority of Muslims who were unlearned and who had not had a firm footing in any orthodox Şūfī orders, were victims of rustic irregular Şūfī orders.

The phenomenal degeneration in Şūfī organizations had a great effect on the Muslims. They were either misguided by the heretic Şūfīs or were left without any spiritual guidance during those days of religious chaos.

When Sayyid Aḥmad started his reform movement, he not only censured these heretic Şūfīs, he also pronounced all practices introduced by them, such as excessive veneration for the saints, visiting their tombs and shrines, as un-Islāmic. He admonished the Muslims to reject all these religious abuses.

The above exposition of Şūfīsm gives us the picture of the religious position of the Muslims. But we have not yet seen what was the position of other religious forces in the society of the period of our consideration, and what position the Muslims had in relation to those religious forces.

It may be noted here that the Muslims were not only victims of their own religious corruption, they were also subject to the pressure of other religious groups. Of course, Sayyid Aḥmad's movement was not aimed at countering those

religious forces. But for the sake of explaining the position of the Muslims vis-a-vis those religious forces, and for knowing all sides of the background against which Sayyid Ahmad put in motion his movement, we may discuss those religious forces in brief.

The decline in Muslim religious life was coincident with the rise of Hindu religious revivalism. S.M. Ikrām mentions many cases of forceful conversions of Muslims to Hinduism; marriages of Muslim girls by the Hindus; destruction of mosques or their conversion into temple by the Hindus in retaliation of Awrangzeb's orders to demolish Hindu temples. Ikrām writes: "The widespread religious movements engendered by contact between Islām and Hinduism, had produced a new religious zeal amongst the masses [Hindu masses] , not possible under the older Brahminism which was exclusive in outlook... Even in relation to Islām, Hinduism was exhibiting a new vigour, greater self-confidence and even a spirit of defiance... Hinduism was by now very much on the offensive¹² and was absorbing a number of Muslims." Commenting on the audacity of Hindus in conversion and forceful marriages of Muslim girls, one Hindu writer says: "So widespread was this practice of converting Muslim girls to Hinduism that those orders [Royal Decrees declaring such marriages unlawful]¹³ discovered more than four thousand such women." This figure, of course, applies only to the Kashmir area.

In passing it may be mentioned that there was a Hindu reform movement, launched by Rājā Rām Mohan Roy(1772—1833). This movement, Brahmo Samāj, was peaceful and apparently had no hostility towards Islām. The period of Rājā Rām's actual movement coincided with that of Sayyid Aḥmad's spiritual attainment and reforming career. One writer says about Rājā Rām: "... the years from 1800 to 1828 were the years that formed him and that while he was influenced by Hinduism, Islām and Buddhism, the forces which proved creative in him were unquestionably Christianity and the influence of the West in general." But despite the coincidence and the working of Islāmic influence on Rājā Rām, Sayyid Aḥmad does not seem to be conscious of this Hindu reform movement.

Another religious force at work in the society of the period under study was the Christian missionary. We do not intend to go into a detailed history of missionary activities. Our purpose is only to show Muslim feelings about missionaries. It may be mentioned here that from the beginning of the East India Company's rule in India, the administration was anti-missionary and put strong restrictions on missionary entry into India. But later on those restrictions were relaxed. Writing about the Hindu-Muslim feelings at the arrival of new missionaries, one writer says: "The arrival of the Protestant Missionaries in Bengal and southern India after 1793,... drew new attention to missionary work in all its form.

The zeal of these men, the diversity of their talents, and the rapid expansion of their sphere of activity had not been equalled since the earliest days of the Jesuits in India. Thousands of Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, felt for the first time the impact of enthusiastic evangelism inseparably bound up with a programme of social and educational reform." ¹⁵

We have said above that although Sayyid Ahmad did not set in motion his reform movement to counter Hindu-Christian religious activities, still the fact remains that those forces were active in the society during his reform period, and the Muslims were affected by them.

III

In this section we propose to discuss the social life of Muslim India of the period of our consideration. Although we shall not go into detail, still we shall present a general situation, and concentrate on those particular points against which Sayyid Ahmad struggled.

The social condition of Muslim India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was perhaps the worst of all other conditions. The Hindu-Muslim socio-religious intercourse in India was a matter of inter-absorption and assimilation. The traffic was two ways. In the case of the Muslims, we know that Muslims converted from Hinduism and

Hindu girls married by the Muslims, brought with them the customs and practices of their previous faith; their new co-religionists not only absorbed those practices, but perhaps adopted them with enthusiasm as something new. This Hindu-Muslim mixed tradition in India, beginning at least as early as thirteenth century, became a conspicuous phenomenon in the life of Muslims during the late Mughal period. In some places in particular, this mixed tradition has continued until recent years. The Muslim religious reform movements of the early nineteenth century in India, such as the one initiated by Sayyid Ahmad (Farā'idī Movement of Bengal was the other), have aimed primarily at purging Islām of such Hindu practices. Thus one writer says: "The widespread saint worship, and the masses whose imperfect conversion to Islām left them in possession of customs and beliefs that were far more Hindu than Muslim led certain ardent soul to inaugurate a puritanical reform..."¹⁶

It may be mentioned that the most cases of social abuses among the Muslims were localized in smaller towns and villages. All over India, although the Muslims professed Islām, bore Muslim names, they practised Hindu customs, worshipped village deities. In times of difficulties, instead of offering prayer to God for relief, they used to run to dead and living saints for the fulfilment of their desire or for relief from suffering. They believed in miracles, and magical power of their pīrs.

There were some Muslim sects who even retained Hindu names and practised all Hindu social customs. For example, the Me'ōs and the Minās of Alwār and Bharatpūr had purely Hindu names, celebrated Diwālī, Deshra (two Hindu festivals) and Janam-ashtami (the birthday of Hindu god Krishna). Like the Hindus, they used to cease from all works on certain occasions, such as Amavas (the night when there is no moon).¹⁷ These sects made regular pilgrimage to Ajmeer. There were some sects who were organized in dā'irahs (circles) like Şūfīs and lived under spiritual heads whom they called Sayyids. The Mahdawīs of Aḥmadābād, e.g., believed in Mahdī, who had already appeared, as they believed. His appearance, they believed, had made all kind of prayers unnecessary.

Besides these sectarian practices, there were some cults which became objects of universal veneration. The cult of Shaykh Tabārī in Sindh and that of Ghāzī Miyān in Bihar can be cited as examples. Their shrines were visited by large number of Muslims on appointed occasions. Ghāzī Miyān's fair was so popular even until recent time that it attracted Muslims almost from all parts of India. In Bengal, the cult of Mubārak Ghāzī was particularly popular. He was believed to be a faqīr who demonstrated his magical powers by riding on a tiger. It is said that every village in the Sundarban¹⁸ area had an altar dedicated to him.

At any rate, it is not possible to cite here examples

of all social abuses so widespread all over India. The point we have been trying to make is to give a general picture of the situation with some examples. In nutshell, the Muslims of rural areas of India of the period of our consideration were Muslims by name more than by practice and belief.

Professor Mujeeb contends that they were more than three-¹⁹fourths Hindu.

We have said that an exhaustive description of social condition is not possible here. But it seems that any kind of description will remain incomplete for our understanding of the depth of social evil among the Muslims without mentioning an important event of recent past which appeared in a news item of the Statesman of March 11, 1959. The news item reads:

"A Hindu temple near Suratgarh in Rajasthan has Muslim priests who perform worship of the idol and receive offerings from devotees. This has been going for generations.

"The temple in question is at Ghogamerhi, which has an idol of Ghugaji, a Rajput saint who is reputed to have performed miracles in his lifetime.

"Mr. Murlidhar Vyas, who had tabled question on this subject in the State Assembly, was told today by the Minister in charge of temples, Mr. Damodhar Vyas, that Mr. Ratan Singh Chohan had petitioned the government in 1951, disputing the right of the Muslim family to act as priests in the temple

dedicated to his ancestors, and claiming the rights for himself. The Minister said that the Government had upheld²⁰ the rights of the Muslim family after an enquiry."

We do not intend to make any comment on the judgement of the government. Our purpose here is only to call attention to such a grave situation that persists till today.

Thus we see that in the course of these centuries of Muslim religio-social degeneration, the Muslims had gone far away from the ideals of their religious and social practices. Many Muslim syncretic sects, inspired by the heretic Şūfīsm came into existence. Thus 'Azīz Aḥmad says: "Another group of Muslim syncretic sects is the one inspired by irreligious (bi-shar') Şūfīsm. In its Indian context it is a series of vulgarization of Şūfī practices among half-convert religious communities. It concentrated on bizarre practices to catch the eye of the common man. Thus, Musā Suhāg, an effeminate Şūfī of Gujrat dressed himself like a woman and wore bangles. Hazratī, Gabraī and Pagalnathī sects were founded in Bengal by bi-shar' Şūfīs and retained some element of sakti worship,²¹ but their followers were largely Hindus."

We can see from the above description what a deplorable social situation was prevalent at the time of Sayyid Aḥmad's reform movement. And against these social evils, such as widespread saint worship; Muslim participation in Hindu festivals; worship of Hindu deities by the Muslims; Muslim

visit to shrines and tombs, Sayyid Aḥmad launched his jihād (struggle).

We shall, however, conclude this survey after examining an opinion about Muslim socio-religious life expressed by a contemporary Indian Muslim gentleman, who witnessed many things personally in his practical life and suffered immensely. In this discussion our main point of interest will be the affair of widow remarriage, the reform of which Sayyid Aḥmad enforced at the initial stage of his reforming career.

Luṭfullāh(b.1817) was a native of Dharanagar(Malwā, present Madhya Pradesh of India). He lost his father at the age of four. His early life was miserable, and he wandered from place to place. In course of those wanderings, he fell into traps of social evils many times. He wrote his autobiography in 1854, giving the account of his life up to 1844.

Luṭfullāh's autobiography is an account of a life lived in a society which was full of vices, superstitions and corruptions. In this respect this book is an important document for our studies. However, without going into the details of the social evils from which he suffered as they are given by the author, we will limit our description only to those observations made by him about the general condition of Muslim socio-religious life.

Luṭfullāh was strack to see the Muslims attending,

with all seriousness, the Jewish Antique ceremony. He remarks:
 "Here I must express my wonder that Muslims are so strict in
 adhering to this hurtful and sometimes fatal operation,
 though the sacred Kuran [sic] is entirely silent upon the
 subject. Common-sense should teach my good people not to
 deprive a son of Adam of any part of his body bestowed on
 him by nature..." He goes on saying:

Notwithstanding this scrupulousness
 in a rite which our sacred book has not
 made binding on us, most of the true
 believers in general at this time neglect
 many strict orders enjoined by the
 Kuran[sic],— such as prayers five times
 a day, fasting thirty days annually, the
 bestowal of alms to the extent of a
 fortieth part of one's property annually,
 and pilgrimage to Mecca once during
 one's lifetime, if it can be afforded.
 True believers are prohibited from
 making use of any inebriating things,
 and from receiving or paying interest
 on money. These, and many other
 religious duties, I am sorry to find
 are very loosely attended to by the
 Muslims of this time in the world.²³

The author continues: "Prayers and fasts are observed
 by very few of the religious character only, and the prescribed
 charity by one among a thousand of the rich. Pilgrimage is
 performed by very few people of affluence;..."²⁴

Luṭfullāh narrates the interesting story of his
 mother's second marriage. He says that during their visit to
 Ujjain(1810) his mother's marriage proposal came, and his
 uncle, considering his mother's age(twenty-seven years) and

her beauty, was pressing hard for her consent to the marriage proposal. His uncle told his mother that it was a sin to remain unmarried for the sake of name only— a sin against their(Muslim) law; besides, it was sheer folly and a great pity to put a restraint on nature, in attempting which many pious persons naturally fell victims to heinous crimes. Luṭfullāh says: "To this my mother made a very angry reply, telling him[uncle] that she knew she and her son [Luṭfullāh] proved cumbersome to him, but, in future, she would take great care to live separately upon her own industry; and, as for a second change in the state of her free life, she would rather go to hell than submit to such nonsense again."²⁵

Although Luṭfullāh's mother ultimately remarried, but this incident tells us how deep rooted was the aversion to widow remarriage in the minds of women in the early nineteenth century. We shall see later that widow remarriage was one of the first reforms which Sayyid Aḥmad effected.

Luṭfullāh devoted considerable space in his biography describing what he calls "Superstitions in Hindustan." The seriousness and diffusion of social vices can be understood from a few instances we shall mention below.

Luṭfullāh says that when his step father was imprisoned, he attributed it partly to destiny and partly to having his head shaved on an unlucky day. Luṭfullāh goes on to say:

Upon almost all undertaking of importance they [Muslims] will consult astrology.

Marriages, going on journey, the birth of a child, the commencement of a building, venesection, and even shaving one's head, are all occasions which require an astrologer to be consulted, and lucky days and hours are appointed for such acts. Six days in every lunar month are considered unlucky; to find out these, count on the tips of the fingers, beginning from the little finger to the thumb and repeating the same for the thirty days, and the days that come on the tip of the middle finger are avoided; they are as follows, 3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th, 23rd, and 28th.²⁶

It is not necessary to quote innumerable instances of this kind. We intend to only draw attention to the fact that this was the picture of Muslim life without any exaggeration. It was the desire of a sincere Muslim like Luṭfullāh to bring to notice that of which he himself witnessed and suffered.

The above description of background and environment—religious and social, though the description is by no means complete, in which Sayyid Aḥmad lived, and in which he experienced many unhappy events enables us to understand against what evils Sayyid Aḥmad struggled. The description of Luṭfullāh shows that the Muslims were not only steeped in social vices, they even forgot or neglected the fundamentals of their religion.

In Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm, Sayyid Aḥmad made a strong restatement about the obligation of the fundamentals of Islām; admonished the Muslims to follow them in the true meaning. In order to enforce the obligation of the Hajj on the Indian Muslims,

against the common belief to the contrary under certain circumstances, Sayyid Ahmad made a practical demonstration.

In the next chapter we shall discuss the early life of Sayyid Ahmad. In this connection, we shall concentrate particularly on those points that show Şūfī elements in his practices, and the points that are relevant to his reform movement.

CHAP. III.

EARLY LIFE OF SAYYID AḥMAD.

In this chapter we propose to discuss the early life of Sayyid Aḥmad. Of course, we do not wish to write the full history of his early life, rather we shall concentrate on those factors that are necessary for our understanding of his religious reform movement. These are following:-

1. His birth in a Ṣūfī family;
2. His upbringing in a religious environment;
3. His inclination towards piety, and spirituality.

It may be mentioned here that Sayyid Aḥmad was not born into a princely family, therefore his life history has not been preserved in a family record. A family record can often prevent controversy over the facts of life of an individual. In the case of Sayyid Aḥmad, his biographers debate even over the exact date of his birth. We, therefore, have to be careful in relying on information provided by the secondary sources. Of course, we may accept secondary sources as long as they do not contradict historical facts.

I.

Sayyid Aḥmad was born at Rā'ē Barēlī¹ in Awādh(present

Uttar Pradesh of India), on the 6th of Şafar, 1201 A.H./29th November, 1786 A.D. But the first Urdū biographer of Sayyid Aḥmad, Jaʿfar Thānēsari, says that he was born on the first day of the thirteenth century of Islāmīc era, which implies a special significance. Sayyid Aḥmad traces his genealogy back to Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, the fourth Caliph of Islām. Sayyid Aḥmad's father, Sayyid Muḥammad ʿIrfān, was a Şūfī, who used to live in Lucknow, probably in connection with service.

The forefathers of Sayyid Aḥmad were inhabitants of Arabia, who came to India in early thirteenth century with a view of preaching Islām. Sayyid Shāh ʿIlmullāh (1033—1096/1633—1685), the great-great-grandfather of Sayyid Aḥmad, who came to Rāʾē Barēlī. He was a disciple of Shaykh Adam Bennurī. ʿIlmullāh built a mosque on the bank of the River Saʿī in 1050/1640, which eventually came to be known Takīyah-i ʿIlmullāh or Dāʿirah-i ʿIlmullāh, and this is the place where Sayyid Aḥmad was born. Dāʿirah-i ʿIlmullāh served as a centre, from where radiated the ideas and ideals of the movement of Shāh Walīyullāh, on the one hand and many members of Sayyid Aḥmad's family were associated with the circle of Walīyullāh at Delhi, on the other hand.

It appears that the family of Sayyid Aḥmad had a long Şūfī tradition and it was under the influence of Walīyullāhī reform movement. Sayyid Aḥmad was permeated with the influence of these two factors which must have been working in moulding

his life and activities, as we shall see later.

Discussing the family history of Sayyid Aḥmad, one writer says:

His father, Muḥammad 'Irfān, belonged to a prominent family, renowned for its holiness and religious learning. His great-great-grandfather, Sayed 'Alamullāh [sic], who lived in the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb, was a celebrated saint of his age. He also had the distinction of initiating others into the spiritual path of the mystics... Three of his sons participated in jihād, and two of his grandsons fell martyrs in the battlefield. Sayed Aḥmad's grandfather, Sayed Muḥammad Nūr, took service under Prince Muḥammad 'Azīm, son of Aurangzeb... From such ancestors, Sayed Aḥmad had both the mystical and the martial traits in his character.⁸

There are ample evidences to show that the family of Sayyid Aḥmad had a mystical tradition. This is the point we are trying to emphasize, because this is an important factor for our understanding of Sayyid Aḥmad and his reform movement. As to the martial trait of his family, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm does not provide us with any information to show that during the first phase of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad indulged in warfare.

II

Turning to the early life of Sayyid Aḥmad, we are told that according to the tradition of Indian nobles, Sayyid

Aḥmad was sent to a Maktab(elementary Muslim religious educational institution) at the age of four years and four months. Almost immediately he showed himself to be un-promising as a student to the utter disappointment of his parents and other members of his family. He had neither taste not inclination for education. Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī, a nephew and close companion of Sayyid Aḥmad, writes that during the three years of his studentship in the maktab, Sayyid Aḥmad was able to memorise only a few chapters(sūrahs) of the Qur'ān, and to write only some simple words. His father seems to have become completely disappointed and said: "Leave his affairs to the will of God, whatever is good for him will come out."⁹

Thānēsarī, speaking about the problem of Sayyid Aḥmad's education, puts in an apologetic word saying that the quality of "illiteracy" which he "inherited" from the Prophet, was¹⁰ becoming manifest. Another writer says that during the school days of Sayyid Aḥmad whenever he looked at books, the words disappeared from before his eyes. When Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was informed of this situation, he inquired whether Sayyid Aḥmad could see other small things? When a positive answer was given, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz advised that his education be stopped. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz considered that exoteric(zāhirī 'ilm) had not been allotted to Sayyid Aḥmad; rather he would acquire¹¹ esoteric education('ilm ludnī aw bātinī).

The above information is provided by a writer of the

recent past. We suspend our comment until we are in a position to know more about Sayyid Ahmad's education.

Sayyid Ahmad, however, developed an aptitude for sporting activities. He spent most of his time in kabadi, wrestling, swimming¹² etc.

Sayyid Ahmad's interest in sports should not give us an impression that he neglected his religious obligations. Makhzan-i Ahmadi informs us that from the time of his mid-teens Sayyid Ahmad began to live an extremely pious life. He was endowed with such a nature(fitrat) of piety that even the slightest deviation from the commandments of God could not be tolerated by him. As for his desire to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet, he was so overwhelmed with it that he tried to fashion every act of his life on the pattern of the Sunnah. Even during his boyhood, there was no instance showing that he had ever strayed from the path of righteousness(jadah-'i haqq) or had given preference to permissible acts(rukhsat) over the obligatory ordinance of God(¹³'azimat-i 'amal). The author of Makhzan-i Ahmadi says with emphasis that natural piety(fatri sa'adat) is granted¹⁴ to only a few fortunate persons, and Sayyid Ahmad of them.

This religious aspect of Sayyid Ahmad's early life is very important for our study. His attitude towards following the shar'ī ahkām(religious ordinances) and avoiding the innovations

or deviations was, in fact, the result of his religious upbringing. We have seen above that Sayyid Aḥmad was born into a Ṣūfī environment. The religious force was creative in Sayyid Aḥmad, which shaped him eventually to launch his reform movement. It is the righteousness of Sayyid Aḥmad which impelled Shāh Ismā‘īl to express his conviction that from the very beginning Sayyid Aḥmad's person was created with qualities resembling those of the Prophet. And it is Sayyid Aḥmad's spirituality which convinced some of his biographers to declare that he was a born ¹⁵ walī. This kind of expression, of course, may appear to non-Ṣūfīs as mere laudatory and exaggeration, but the fact still remains that Muslim hagiography is replete with stories of many saints and savants who showed piety at a very early age.

Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Alī tells us further, that in his mid-teens (sana-i tamīz), Sayyid Aḥmad made human service (khidmat-i khālq) his special sign (shī‘ār). He was troubled by the sight of destitutes, and he showed special sympathy towards children, orphans and old persons. For him there was no distinction between the rich and poor, upper class and lower class. Every morning and evening, he used to visit his poor neighbours to inquire about their well-being and to bring them wood, water, or whatever they needed. The people in the neighbourhood of Sayyid Aḥmad's house were in general the murīds of his family. Sayyid Aḥmad's service to them ¹⁶ very often startled them for the very fact that they were

being the murīds, supposed to render service(khidmat) to Sayyid Aḥmad, instead, he was very much particular in rendering them his best service.

We know that human service constitutes an important element in the Ṣūfī teaching. The Ṣūfīs consider it a purely religious obligation. For example, Shaykh Sharf-ud-Dīn Yaḥyā Munāirī, an eminent saint, is reported to have said: "The nearest way to reach God for kings and nobles and men of means and wealth, is to succour the needy and to offer a helping hand to the down-trodden. A saint has said there are many paths leading to the Lord but the shortest is to console¹⁷ the afflicted and to give comfort to the hearts of men..."

Equality of man was an important point in the teaching of Sayyid Aḥmad. During his reforming career, on different occasions he emphasized on this point, as we shall see later. On one occasion, he came to know that there was a group of brick-burners near Allāhābād, who were regarded by other Muslims as untouchables. In order to remove this bad notion from the minds of the Muslims, Sayyid Aḥmad visited those brick-burners and even had a meal with them.

The social contact on the part of Sayyid Aḥmad during his early life makes him distinct from a large number of Ṣūfīs who passed most of their time in their khāncāhs(hermitages). His contact with the people offered him opportunities to

witness their religio-social life; and the un-Islāmic practices, which he must have had observed among the people, remained ingrained in his heart. Thus, we may assume that Sayyid Aḥmad's contact with the society in his early life enabled him to realize socio-religious problems of Muslim life which he tried to eradicate during his reforming career.

Sayyid Aḥmad spent eighteen years of his early life in his village home before he left home because of circumstances which we will discuss in the following section. In this section we shall also see a further spiritual development in Sayyid Aḥmad which ultimately led to his joining the centre of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz at Delhi.

III

We have noted above that Sayyid 'Irfān, father of Sayyid Aḥmad, used to live in Lucknow. He died in 1214/1799. His eldest son, Sayyid Ibrāhīm(d.1242/1810) was in the service of Amīr Khān at Malwā(Rajputana). Sayyid Ishāq, the other son of Sayyid 'Irfān, studied at Delhi under Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and his brother, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Sayyid Ishāq(d.1234/1818) was not an earning member of the family.

None of the sources mentioned at the beginning tells us about the source of income of Sayyid Aḥmad's family. There is also nothing on record as to how much Sayyid 'Irfān and

Sayyid Ibrāhīm earned monthly or yearly. There is no information as to whether the family of Sayyid Aḥmad owned any land or not. The information we have, tells us that his was a Ṣūfī family; and the members of it were not interested in amassing wealth because of their mystical tendency.

Under these circumstances, we can only assume that Sayyid Aḥmad's family did not possess much property and his father did not leave behind property or money of significance. Therefore, after the death of his father, the brunt of economic pressure fell on Sayyid Aḥmad; perhaps Sayyid Ibrāhīm's earning was not enough to support the family.

It appears that Sayyid Aḥmad was not unaware of his economic responsibility to his family. He decided to go to work. Since Lucknow was the nearest city, he left for Lucknow¹⁸ sometime in 1804. Moreover, Lucknow had also been his father's place of service. He may have sought assistance from his father's friends. In fact, he met one such an Amīr, whose hospitality he enjoyed during his stay at Lucknow.

Sayyid Aḥmad went to Lucknow along with some of his relatives and friends, of whom his nephew, Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī, the author of Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, may be mentioned. Therefore, Makhzan-i Aḥmadī may be accepted as the main source of information for Sayyid Aḥmad's life in Lucknow.

On the authority of Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, other writers inform us that Sayyid Aḥmad stayed in Lucknow for seven months.

Although he enjoyed the hospitality of an Amīr (his name has not been mentioned), who had been his father's intimate friend and disciple, he did not get a job. It has been reported that the Amīr later received a mansab of one hundred from the Nawāb of Awādh, and Sayyid Aḥmad was given two positions of the hundred, but he gave these away to his friends. After a four months' stay in the company of the Amīr, Sayyid Aḥmad accompanied the Amīr on his tour with the Nawāb, who went hunting for three months. After that Sayyid Aḥmad left for ¹⁹Delhi.

It is difficult to believe that during his seven months' stay, Sayyid Aḥmad should remain content himself with the hospitality of his host, to whom he had rendered no service. All the writers say that the eight persons who accompanied Sayyid Aḥmad to Lucknow, kept themselves busy all the time in looking for jobs, although they were unsuccessful. They managed to subsist with difficulty by sometimes selling caps and small pamphlets written by themselves. In the case of Sayyid Aḥmad, we have no information that he ever looked for a job.

In the light of the economic situation of Sayyid Aḥmad's family, described above, his decision to go to Lucknow in quest of a job seems to be the result of economic pressure. Sayyid Aḥmad does not seem to have possessed money during his stay in Lucknow. In the words of Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī, their condition in Lucknow became precarious especially

after the food supply which they had carried from home was
²⁰
 exhausted.

In such economic plight, Sayyid Aḥmad's indifference to finding a job may suggest some inner transformation. This was revealed by Sayyid Aḥmad at the beginning of his trip in the company of the Amīr and the Nawāb of Awādh. Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī informs us that from the very beginning of that tour, Sayyid Aḥmad began telling his friends "Brothers! forget about the idea of getting a job, and in its stead, let us go to Delhi, and achieve spiritual perfection(kasb-i fayd) from Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, who is today the greatest sign(nishān)
²¹
 of God"; and he used to recite very often the following couplet of Ḥāfiẓ:

Maṣliḥat-i did-i man an-ast kih yārān hamah kār
Bi-guzarand-o-khum-i turrah-'i yār-i girand ²²

(The best thing in my view is that friends should leave all
 [other] business,
 And grab the ringlet of the tress of a friend).

The above fact indicates that Sayyid Aḥmad had experienced a spiritual development in his heart as a consequence, his heart's longing turned solely towards spiritual achievement. This phenomenon seems to have made him indifferent towards the this-worldly affairs. Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī tells us further that Sayyid Aḥmad had been so persistent in his admonitions(naṣīḥat) that one night Sayyid Aḥmad told him

about his final decision to leave for Delhi, and he tried to persuade Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī to accompany him.²³

This spiritual development in Sayyid Aḥmad's heart may be said an intensification of mystical inclinations already in evidence while he was still at Rā'ē Barēlī. Nadwī informs us that he passed nights in performing tahajjud²⁴ prayer and dhikr. During his stay at Lucknow, he had considerable opportunity for devotion, which helped further the development of his spiritual faculty. This is a crucial factor which eventually prepared Sayyid Aḥmad for initiating his reform movement as we shall see later.

In the main, this spiritual urge, it appears, caused Sayyid Aḥmad's early departure from Lucknow. On arrival at Delhi, he presented himself before Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz for spiritual guidance. He, thus, began a new phase in his spiritual career and very soon reached the threshold of its perfection, which was followed by his reform movement,

Summarizing the early life of Sayyid Aḥmad, we find that in his early age he had mystical tendency. During his stay at Lucknow, he experienced a further spiritual development. And it was this spiritual urge which caused his joining the circle of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, as we shall see later, but not any political motivation.

It may be mentioned that besides spiritual urge, which seems to have caused Sayyid Aḥmad's early departure from

Lucknow, some other factors may have contributed to his action. From the time he arrived in Lucknow, he was living in the circle of an Amīr, detached from the kind of association to which he belonged. For the first time in his life, the real life of an Amīr was exposed to him in full shape. Such an existence was utterly different from the life of a Ṣūfī. Finally, when he went on tour for three months in the company of the Amīr and the Nawāb, he had further opportunity to witness the pompous life maintained by the Amīrs and the Nawābs.

Sayyid Aḥmad, who was born and brought up in a Ṣūfī environment, must have detested the this-worldly life of Amīrs and Nawābs. The Shī'ah environment of Lucknow might also have disgusted him. During his reforming career, as we shall see later, he categorically denounced all Shī'ah practices and branded them as absolutely un-Islāmic.

CHAP. IV

SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENT OF SAYYID AḤMAD

I

Three conjectural factors have been suggested at the end of the previous chapter, viz., spiritual urge, aversion to this-worldly life and antipathy to the Shī'ah environment of Lucknow, as contributing to the early departure of Sayyid Aḥmad from Lucknow for Delhi. As a matter of fact, one writer considers the last one as the deciding factor, and says that Sayyid Aḥmad had actually confronted the Shī'ah at Lucknow.^I No other writer, however, mentions the confrontation.

Sayyid Aḥmad left for Delhi alone. Many stories have been written in connection with his journey to Delhi. Some of the information is confusing and out of context.²

Sayyid Aḥmad arrived in Delhi sometime in 1804 A.D. and presented himself before Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. Arwāḥ Thalātha provides us with information completely out of context. It reads: "Sayyid Sāhib for the first time came to Shāh Walīyullāh. This time Sayyid Sāhib gave bay'at to Shāh Sāhib[?] and after six days he went back home. After six months, he came back, and for six months remained under the

guidance[tarbiyat]of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz³..."

We know that the difference between the death of Shāh Walīyullāh(1762) and the birth of Sayyid Aḥmad(1786) is about twenty-four years; it was about forty-two years after the death of Shāh Walīyullāh that Sayyid Aḥmad came to Delhi for the first time.

This is one of the glaring examples of incorrect information supplied by some of the books we have at our Disposal. It was, however, the time of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz(d.1824), the son and successor of Shāh Walīyullāh. The fame of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz as an 'ālim-sūfī of his time was by no means less reputed than that of his father. Abūl Kalām Āzād remarks of him: "The intellectual authority of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz reached as far as Samarcand, Bukhārā, Egypt and Syria. His brothers were the suns of learning. Outside the family, their intellectual⁴ spirit was in action."

Why did Sayyid Aḥmad go to Delhi? He gave the reason in reply to the enquiry of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz: "Why have you come to Delhi?" Sayyid Aḥmad replied: "Considering your holy personality as ghanīmat[one thing as the means of achieving something else], I have come in quest of God Almighty"(āpkī dhāt mucaddas kū ghanīmat samajh kar Allāh ta'ālā jall shānuh ke talab min punchā hun).⁵ Then Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz replied:[If]"God's grace accompanies the situation,

then you will achieve your own fatherly and motherly heritage"
 (khudā kā faḍl shāmil-i hāl ha'e tū apnī pidarī awr madarī
⁶
warāthāt hāsil kar lū ge).

By "fatherly and motherly heritage", Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz evidently was referring to Sayyid Nu'mān and Sayyid Abū Sa'īd, uncle and maternal grandfather of Sayyid Aḥmad, respectively. Of course, apart from these two personalities, there were many other persons of the family of Sayyid Aḥmad who had received both exoteric and esoteric learning in the circle of Shāh Walīyullāh himself and later in the circle of his sons.

From the brief discussion that took place between Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Sayyid Aḥmad at their first meeting, it is clear that the factor which accounted for latter's move to Delhi, was spiritual, not political. However, following the conversation, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz sent Sayyid Aḥmad to Mawlānā 'Abdul Qādir at the Akbarābādī Mosque.⁷ This event marks the beginning of a new phase in the spiritual life of Sayyid Aḥmad. From then on, though his exoteric and esoteric attainments proceeded side by side, but it was in the latter aspect that he made a phenomenal achievement as we shall see shortly. Sayyid Aḥmad's spiritual achievement prepared him to launch his reform movement.

We have already discussed Sayyid Aḥmad's early educational endeavour, and the difficulty he had allegedly faced at that stage. During his stay at the Akbarābādī Mosque, all sources agree that he studied under Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Shāh Rafi'-ud-Dīn and even Shāh Ismā'īl. Although Sayyid Aḥmad is reported to have studied the Qur'ān, Tafsīr(exegesis), and Hadīth, and some subjects relating to Arabic grammar, such as Nahw(syntax) Ṣarf(prosody) etc., nonetheless, all sources agree that he was not versed in these subjects. In other words, he acquired the necessary knowledge of religious sciences, but he could not complete the standard education. He spoke and understood Arabic fairly well, besides Persian and Urdū. His Persian and Arabic letters are sufficient evidences of his ability to use these languages. In the light of these letters, it is not accurate to call Sayyid Aḥmad an illiterate('ummī) as Thānēsarī has done(supra, ch. 1, p. 21; ch. 111, p. 54). And the story of the disappearance of words from before Sayyid Aḥmad's eyes, as Arwāḥ-i Thalāthah reports(supra, ch. 111, p. 54), seems to be a mere fabrication of the later writers. However, Sayyid Aḥmad was not an 'ālim, either in the technical sense of the term as it was used in the Mughal time, or in the literal sense of the term as it is understood in the modern time. He did not study jurisprudence and theology. As a matter of fact, he was not even interested in jurisprudence. Once he was asked about the meaning of the saying

that a Murshid(spiritual guide) must be an 'ālim. He replied:

'Ālim does not mean that he has studied Ṣadur and Shams Bazighah; here 'ilm means that he must know what makes God Almighty pleased and what makes Him displeased; in other words, he should possess perfect knowledge of awāmir(commandments) and nawāhī(prohibitions). Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq and 'Umar Fārūq did not study Hidāyah or Sharīḥ Wicāyah, yet they were the forerunners of the authors of these books; not only these authors, but also their forerunners and the muḥtahiḍīn (jurists) find precedence in the words of these religious guides(hādīyān-i dīn); the jurists make distinction between bad and good.¹²

The above statement shows that Sayyid Aḥmad had little regard for book education, particularly for studying of fiqh. His main emphasis was on the esoteric knowledge. He was a Ṣūfī. We know from Sirāt-i Mustadīm that his ideas and thoughts were Ṣūfīstic. For his reform movement, which was of Ṣūfī nature, he needed necessary knowledge of religious sciences. By studying the Qur'ān, Tafsīr and the Hadīth at Delhi, Sayyid Aḥmad acquired that necessary knowledge. In Sirāt-i Mustadīm, he discusses only the five fundamentals of Islām; while completely silent on theological matters, as we shall see later. Let us turn to the esoteric learning of Sayyid Aḥmad.

III

It seems that Sayyid Aḥmad's stay in the Akbarābādī

Mosque, provided him with an opportunity for the perfection of his spiritual life. Although we do not have detailed information relating his moment by moment/activities in that mosque, we are told that he devoted his time mostly to ¹³dhikr and shughl(spiritual service). It is also said that besides his personal devotion, he used to serve the mosque and those personalities who came to the mosque to receive ¹⁴instructions from Mawlānā 'Abdul Qādir. Mawlānā 'Abdul Qādir expressing his complete satisfaction with Sayyid Aḥmad is reported to have said: "From this holy personality (buzurg shakhs) signs of perfection(āthār-i kamāl) are ¹⁵manifest."

Biographers of Sayyid Aḥmad inform us that his devotion to his chosen path was so absolute and exclusive that he had a complete change of mind regarding the un-Islāmic activities of the society. It is stated that once he was taken against his will to a Hindu festival by some of his friends; but as soon as they came near the place of the festival, ¹⁶Sayyid Aḥmad fell into a faint.

Sayyid Aḥmad, however, continued unabatedly in his spiritual progress until he entered the ranks of the disciples of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz in 1222/1807. When Sayyid Aḥmad approached Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz to give bay'at(spiritual allegiance), the latter said, "God did not put this holy man(ṣāf bāṭin) under any obligation to seek media(wāṣṭe) for choosing path

of guidance(ikhtiyār tarīqah-i rashad wa hidāyat ke bāb min wāste kā muhtāj nihī rakhā awr wasīlah ke niyāz mand nihī kiyā).

But to the people possessing exoteric knowledge(ahl-i zāhir) everything must have a cause; so to establish proof(hujjat) for common people, I am taking the ¹⁷bay'at."

This is an important remark by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz about Sayyid Aḥmad's progress toward spiritual perfection. To achieve such satisfactory progress in the spiritual journey, Sayyid Aḥmad must have seriously devoted himself to the spiritual path during the three-year stay in the Akbarābādī Mosque under the direct supervision and guidance of Mawlānā 'Abdul Qādir and Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. His progress was the result of untiring dedication and discipline.

After taking the formal bay'at from Sayyid Aḥmad, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz initiated him into the three important Ṣūfī orders, viz., Naqshbandīyah, Qādrīyah and Chishtīyah, of India at that time.

It may be asked how a man could be initiated into more than one Ṣūfī order at the same time? At least among the principal Ṣūfī orders of India, there is no fundamental difference in their rituals. Thus Ḥassan Suharawardy observes: "... apart from the personal loyalty either to the founders of the orders or to the saint or Ṣūfī under whose personal influence a disciple works, the organization of the different fraternities or orders of Ṣūfism mentioned above[viz.,

Suhrawardīyah, Chistīyah, Qādirīyah and Nacshbandīyah are¹⁸

much the same in general principles." He further says:

"Membership of one fraternity does not debar from joining another. A Muslim may adopt the teachings and practices of different orders without losing his original standing in his fraternity. Khwājah Quṭb-al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, whose shrine in Quṭb Minār at Delhi is the object of universal veneration, belonged to the Suhrawardy order, received spiritual gifts from Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir, and then became one of the most distinguished Khalīfas of Khwājah Mu'īn al-Dīn Chistī. The special practices and directions which the founders enjoined¹⁹ on their followers are the only distinctive features."

After the bay'at, Sayyid Aḥmad was taught by his²⁰ pīr, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the different ritualistic practices. This ceremony of bay'at and the teaching of ritualistic practices by the pīr is in accord with typical Ṣūfī practice. Although Sayyid Aḥmad had now formally become a typical Indian Ṣūfī through bay'at, he would raise objections to some traditional Ṣūfī practices.

We are told that when Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz wanted to teach Sayyid Aḥmad, his new disciple, shughl-i barzakh, a Ṣūfī practice in which the murāqabah(silent devotion to) of the imaginary picture of the Shaykh is performed, the latter objected and asked what was the difference between this practice and idol worship? Sayyid Aḥmad maintained

that in the latter practice there is an image of stone, while in the former case the picture is imaginary, occupying a place at the bottom of the heart and being venerated or worshipped. When Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz tried to convince him, he persistently declined to obey and demanded Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions or ijmā'-i ummat as proofs. It is said that the pīr yielded to the stand of his new murīd, and said: "Dear! God has endowed you with the Wilāyat-i
²¹
Anbiyā'."

This event seems very important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it may be regarded as a landmark in the spiritual journey of Sayyid Aḥmad which was followed by his reforming career. Beginning with that event, it may be said that the chapter in his efforts of religious reform began, though the formal beginning was yet to take place. Secondly, it gives us an impression that an 'ālim-sūfī of so great repute as Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was, unaware of the fact that there is a difference between taṣawwur-i shaykh and idol worship. In fact, it appears that an un-Islāmic practice, resembling idol worship, had crept into the religious life of even Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz through the agency of Sūfīsm. Finally, for the first time Sayyid Aḥmad received acknowledgement for his being endowed with Wilāyat-i Anbiā' from his pīr. Recognition from Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was the greatest spiritual achievement for Sayyid Aḥmad.

As regards Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz's practice of taṣawwur-i shaykh, we do not exactly know whether he was aware of the fact that there was no shar'ī support for it. Presumably he was aware of this fact, considering the depth of his knowledge. The fact still remains that these Hinduised or un-Islāmic practices had percolated into Muslim life through the agency of Ṣūfism, and Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was not an exception. We remember that in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm Sayyid Aḥmad considered corrupt Ṣūfism as the chief agency through which religious abuses entered into Muslim life. As a matter of fact, widespread corruptions provided Sayyid Aḥmad with reasons to reform Ṣūfī practices.

Sayyid Aḥmad, however, continued in his spiritual advancement. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz once remarked: "This Sayyid... is so sharp in esoteric knowledge('ilm-i bātinī) that from a slight indication, he understands the high stages and passes them." ²² Describing the situation of Sayyid Aḥmad's devotion during his stay in the Akbarābādī Mosque, Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah says that at this stage for years he performed the 'ishā' and the fajar prayers(early night and morning ²³ prayers) in a single ablution; that is, he used to pass the whole night in meditation. This continuous absorption in spiritual devotion led him to experience many wonders, such as dreaming of God, the Prophet and his principal companions, among them Abū Bakr and 'Alī, and Fāṭimah, and witnessing the all creatures prostrating themselves on the night of the

27th of Ramādān, 1222 A.H./28th Nov., 1807 A.D.²⁴ This is not the place to enter into a discussion on this subject. Accepting it, as it is in the Ṣūfī tradition, we can see that Sayyid Aḥmad, after about three years' struggle in his travel on the spiritual path had reached one of the highest stages of it. Afterwards, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz certified that Sayyid Aḥmad had been granted Wilāyat-i Anbiyā' and Wilāyat-i²⁵
Awliyā'; the two 'paths' in the spiritual journey of Ṣūfīs which mark the highest stages in the journey to achieve divine awareness. With this verbal certificate, Sayyid Aḥmad left the company of his pīr and went back to Rā'ē Barēlī.

This discussion reveals that Sayyid Aḥmad's three years association with Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was a period of Spiritual attainment for the former; but no political motivation was involved.

IV

Early in 1808 A.D. Sayyid Aḥmad arrived at Rā'ē Barēlī and took up residence in the mosque of Dā'irah-i 'Ilmulāh. The decision to reside in a mosque is an indication of the spiritual stage he had reached during his stay at Delhi. Many Ṣūfīs in India and Pakistan prefer to live in a mosque, rather than usual dwelling, because they consider a mosque to be the perfect place for undisturbed devotion. Sayyid Aḥmad's stay in the mosque offered him a chance to

meet various people to whom he delivered sermons regularly. The main concern of his sermons was to explain the excellences of the Qur'ān and ²⁶Hadīth. It appears that now the preaching of Islām became the chief mission of his life, and for the fulfilment of his mission he was ready to make any sacrifice. As a matter of fact, before the formal inauguration of his religious reform movement, Sayyid Aḥmad kept himself busy in matters relating to preaching and admonishing. At the same time, in his personal life, he followed the sharī'ah more and more strictly.

As regards the personal life of Sayyid Aḥmad, Dihlawī writes that he translated the commands (aḥkām) of sharī'ah into practical life in such a way that his life became ²⁷shar'ī life in actuality. In his teaching, Sayyid Aḥmad always emphasized on the practical aspect of religious life, as we shall see later. His reputation as a pious Ṣūfī spread very quickly in the neighbourhood of Dā'irah-i 'Ilmulāh; it drew the attention of the people, who began to assemble in his presence and to express the desire to become his ²⁸disciples. But he declined to receive bay'at from anyone, in its stead he admonished them against corruption and superstitious activities that were widespread among them. He asked them to live lives in conformity with the commands of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

We do not know the actual reason for Sayyid Aḥmad's

refusal to take the bay'at. Perhaps he was reluctant because he had not yet obtained the khilāfat name(patent of spiritual authority which entitles the receiver to enlist disciples) from his pīr. We know that on the eve of the formal inauguration of his reform movement, he was granted the formal ijāzah(spiritual permission) by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz to receive bay'at from the people.

Though Sayyid Aḥmad did not accept formal bay'at while at Rā'ē Barēlī, nonetheless, he performed the best function of a religious teacher and preacher. He used to say, for example, to people coming to give him bay'at:

For a Muslim the murīdī(discipleship) of God and the Prophet is sufficient; do not tell a lie; do not deceive others. So, this is the mu'zāt(advice); if you become murīd of a pīr and forget these things, your murīdī would be of no use. If you implement these words in your life, you would not need any pīr; make your nafs sarkash(evil desire) your own pīr; take bay'at from it, so that it will not wrap you in devilish influence; and this is the way for salvation in the two lives. 29

How can the words of a pīr or a religious teacher be better than these? Sayyid Aḥmad has made an important statement. This indicated clearly the direction in which he was going to launch his reform movement. His apathy for the commonly accepted idea of pīrī-murīdī is discernible. In that day the pīr had come to be regarded as the sole authority in all matters. In the above statement, we can see that Sayyid Aḥmad has touched briefly on all the fundamental

points that are essential in making a Muslim a perfect Muslim. And to make Muslims perfect was the life mission of Sayyid Ahmad. These sayings and activities of Sayyid Ahmad may be regarded as the pre-movement preparatory occupations. The important point to note at this period of his life is that there is no evidence to show that he indulged in any political activity.

Sayyid Ahmad continued his spiritual devotion and religious activities at Rā'ē Barēlī until he got married. It seems that the economic pressure on his growing family led him to seek other means of livelihood. He was not an 'ālim, ergo, could not be appointed as Qādī, or Muftī, or teacher. The only honourable job he could do was in the army. Amīr Khān Pindarī of Rajputana was struggling indepen-
 30
 dently for temporal power. Sayyid Ibrāhīm, elder brother of Sayyid Ahmad, was still serving under him. His brother's presence in Amīr Khān's service seems to be the deciding factor in Sayyid Ahmad's decision to enter Amīr Khān's
 31
 service. Sayyid Ahmad joined the cavalry of Amīr Khān sometimes in 1224/1810.

Sayyid Ahmad's joining Amīr Khān's service has become a matter of controversy among latter writers on the question of his objective in joining the service. The Muslim nationalists think that this is the stage when he became active for the cause of Muslim nationalism. And his joining the service

of Amīr Khān has become The Point on which they base their argument for their contention that Sayyid Aḥmad tried to champion the cause of Muslim political nationalism (even at this stage) in association with Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Amīr Khān.

This contention of the nationalists does not seem to have any historical basis, as we shall see shortly. And this is the main problem of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement we are trying to deal with in this work. We shall study the opinions of the nationalists in order to explain the situation, which will help us, on the other hand, understand the significance of Sayyid Aḥmad's association with Amīr Khān for his reform movement. In fact, Sayyid Aḥmad's stay in Amīr Khān's service was one of the pre-movement preparatory stages, like his association with Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and the like, as we shall see.

Writers like Ḥayrat Dihlawī, Thānēsari and Nadwī maintain that since Sayyid Aḥmad was destined to fight against the Sikhs, it was God's desire that he should be perfect in military science. Therefore, he needed to rehearse the soldierly gift that was vested in him. They believe that Sayyid Aḥmad went to Amīr Khān's service with this objective.³²

In support of this view, the above mentioned writers do not present any historical evidence. Moreover, from the activities of Sayyid Aḥmad in Rajputana, we know that he did not adopt a rigorous military training programme (we shall

discuss his activities at Rajputana shortly).

'Ubaydullāh Sindhī, an active Indian Nationalist, and Hāfeeẓ Mālik believe that Sayyid Aḥmad was sent to Amīr Khān's service by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz to acquire military training.³³ This idea has been developed out of an imaginary thesis that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz constituted a "Revolutionary Central Organization" for the purpose of enforcing the principles of the reformation movement initiated by his father, Shāh Walīyullāh. Meanwhile, himself issued a "Fatwā"³⁴, to the effect that the portions of India that came under the non-Muslim control had become Dār-ul-Harb (land of infidels or warfare, as against Dār-ul-Islām). This situation placed the Muslims under obligation either to wage a jihād to regain their land or to make hijrat (migration) from India.³⁵ This is the interpretation given to the so-called fatwā by the writers whom we call the Indian Muslim Nationalists.

However, the meaning of the fatwā and the status of the person who is eligible to issue a fatwā (muftī) have been questioned and discussed thoroughly in a recent work. It has been shown in this work that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz had no authority to issue a fatwā nor could his statement be regarded as a fatwā technically.³⁶

Moreover, there is no reference to Sayyid Aḥmad in the writings of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence to show that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz has

asked any Muslim, such as Sayyid Aḥmad, or the Muslim community either to wage a holy war or to migrate from India.

Ghulām Rasūl Mihr believes that Sayyid Aḥmad went to Amīr Khān's service by "divine inspiration."³⁷ Mihr says explicitly that in order to revive Islāmic temporal power, Sayyid Aḥmad went to Amīr Khān with the intention of waging a holy war utilizing Amīr Khān's power.³⁸ In support of his thesis, Mihr refers to Sayyid Aḥmad's words that supposedly have been incorporated in "Waqā'i' Aḥmadī!"

Waqā'i' says that while Sayyid Aḥmad was in the service of Amīr Khān, he said, "In the town of Rā'ē Barēlī I received inspiration from God to go into the army of the famous Nawāb Amīr-ud-Dawlah Bahādūr; I have given you service there; there I have to take some other service from you. Having heard this divine message, I started from there[Rā'ē Barēlī]and on reaching [Malwā]within a few days, I obtained the service of the revered Nawāb."³⁹

This statement needs some explanation. When Sayyid Aḥmad went into Amīr Khān's service, the latter had no titles like Nawāb and Bahādūr. He received these titles only after he was granted the State of Tonk by the East India Company in 1817, and Sayyid Aḥmad left Nawāb's service before these titles were granted.

Sirāt-i Mustaqīm contains all the important divine

inspirations of Sayyid Aḥmad. It was compiled during his career as a reformer(1818—1821), which began after he left the service of Amīr Khān. If Sayyid Aḥmad was really inspired by God to join Amīr Khān's army for the purpose of waging a holy war, why should he not disclose such an important dream at least to his closest disciples and friends like Shāh Ismā'īl and Mawalānā 'Abdul Ḥayy. Moreover, we do not have any evidence to show that during Sayyid Aḥmad's seven years association with Amīr Khān, he ever expressed to Amīr Khān any desire of waging a holy war.⁴⁰ It is, therefore, difficult to accept the statement of "Waqā'i' Aḥmadī" cited by Mihr.

We have briefly discussed three kinds of opinions about Sayyid Aḥmad's objective in joining Amīr Khān's service. All the opinions have focused to one point, that Sayyid Aḥmad went into the service of Amīr Khān with a military objective. In our discussion, we have tried to show that this notion does not have any factual basis. Sayyid Aḥmad joined Amīr Khān's service for the sake of earning money to support his family. Since he was not qualified for any other job, service in the army was the only alternative left for him.

Having explained the confusion that was created by the different opinions about Sayyid Aḥmad's objective, we now turn to his actual activities while in the service of Amīr Khān.

There is no doubt that Sayyid Aḥmad took part in some of the expeditions of Amīr Khān. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn says that he impressed Amīr Khān in two ways— in the field, for which "he was promoted to the command of Amīr Khān's own body-guard", and in the mosque, for which he was asked to lead the prayers after the death of Sayyid Ibrāhīm.⁴¹ Since Sayyid Ibrāhīm died not long after Sayyid Aḥmad had joined the service,⁴² it seems that Sayyid Aḥmad performed the function as the imām almost for the whole period of his stay in the service of Amīr Khān. The position of imāmat offered Sayyid Aḥmad a good chance for the furtherance of religious cause. We are told that Sayyid Aḥmad's pious life influenced to a great extent the life of Amīr Khān, and his son and successor, Wazīr-ud-Dawlah. Both of them became his devoted disciples.⁴³ For the army, in general, Sayyid Aḥmad adopted a special policy. He used to deliver sermons regularly on the importance of the good life and good actions. He demonstrated how to model character and convictions through actions (amal) in conformity with Islām. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn says, "Because of his exemplary life, his character and his spiritual gifts⁴⁴ he became a centre of attraction for Amīr Khān's men."

Thus, we see that Sayyid Aḥmad's position as an imām while in the association of Amīr Khān, offered him an opportunity for devotion and made possible further progress in his spiritual advancement. In 1817, it seems that he reached the stage where he felt that he should devote his time

fully in the way of God, that is, in reforming his religion, he left his position of service and returned to Delhi.

Again the nationalists controvert as to why he left his post? His departure is generally explained in reference to the peace agreement of 1817 between Amīr Khān and the East India Company.

We have said at the beginning that during the first phase of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad did not indulge in political thinking. In order to prove this contention of ours historically true, we have to clarify the situation that was created by the controversy of writers on the reason of Sayyid Aḥmad's exit from Amīr Khān's service.

VI

Thānēsari and Dihlawī hold that Sayyid Aḥmad played the role of moderator between the English and Amīr Khān.⁴⁵ At the same time they say that when the peace was being negotiated, Sayyid Aḥmad left the service. It is hardly reasonable that a mediator leaves the scene before his mission was complete.

Mihr and Nadwī maintain that Sayyid Aḥmad was opposed to any peace-treaty with the English. But since he could not prevent it, he chose to leave the service. After a few days, he informed Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz by letter about the

situation and his move. Their authority for this view is
⁴⁶
 "Waqā'i' Ahmadi".

The view of Sindhī and Mas'ud 'Ālam Nadwī is the same. ⁴⁷

We have seen before that Sindhī has not given any historical evidence in support of his view that Sayyid Ahmad was deputed by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz to Amīr Khān's service. Now he says that as soon as Amīr Khān entered into a treaty with the English, Sayyid Ahmad left Amīr Khān's service, because he was opposed to the treaty. Before his return to Delhi, Sayyid Ahmad informed Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz about the treaty by letter. Let us see what was the letter.

Sayyid Ahmad is reported to have written to 'Abdul 'Azīz:

"This humble [man] is very soon coming to your presence. Here the position of the army had become hopeless. Nawāb Sāhib had joined with the English. There is no way ⁴⁸ to stay here."

All writers quote this Urdū letter which appears to be an incomplete text. We do not know whether the letter was written originally in Urdū or Persian. We know, Sayyid Ahmad usually expressed himself in Persian. All his letters now preserved in the British Museum(MS.), are in Arabic and Persian. The important collection of his sayings, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, was in Persian.

We have said before that "Waqā'i' Aḥmadī" is a compilation of reports and discussions prepared by the disciples of Sayyid Aḥmad long after his death. The incorporation of any genuine letter written by Sayyid Aḥmad, after the lapse of such a long period is extremely doubtful. We, therefore, are hesitant to accept the above quoted letter as a valid proof. The whole story seems to be a mere fabrication by story-tellers.

We have indicated above that the changed political situation reflects in the writings of later writers about Sayyid Aḥmad. The afore said story is an example of later writers' attitude towards the British as far as British policy towards the "Wahhābīs" was concerned.

Thus, speaking about the first group of writers (pro-British), Maḥmūd Ḥusayn says: "It may well be that the Sayyid had not yet reached that status, politically speaking, when in a matter like this he could influence in a decisive manner man like Amīr Khān⁴⁹." He suggests that the writers in question wrote when the British were still persecuting the "Wahhābīs". It was natural, therefore, not to provoke the British by saying anything against them.⁵⁰

The later works, Maḥmūd Ḥusayn says, were published in a totally different atmosphere, and it was not necessary⁵¹ for their authors to show Sayyid Aḥmad as pro-British. This would mean that the genuineness of the view of both groups is extremely doubtful.

We, therefore, conclude this explanation with contention that Sayyid Ahmad was fully independent in his decisions to join the service of Amīr Khān and also to leave it. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was not a party to Sayyid Ahmad's decision. His decision to join Amīr Khān's service was conditioned by economic circumstances; and his decision to leave the service seems to have been guided by his sense of responsibility to serve the cause of his religion. No political factor seems to have been working in his taking decisions.

Summarizing the whole discussion, we see that Sayyid Ahmad's move to Delhi; his association with Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz; his education and spiritual attainment; his stay in Dā'irah-i 'Ilmulāh and finally, his association with Amīr Khān, all were pre-movement preparatory stages, leading to the inauguration of his religious reform movement, which we shall discuss in the next chapter.

CHAP. V

REFORMING CAREER OF SAYYID AḤMAD

At the end of the previous chapter we suggested that when the spiritual urge of Sayyid Aḥmad reached a certain stage, he felt its intensity so much that he left the service of Amīr Khān and returned to Delhi in order to devote his time fully to the service of his religion. In other words, his association with Amīr Khān seems to be the last of the preparatory stages leading to the formal beginning of his reform movement.

But the nationalist writers, like ‘Ubaydullāh Sindhī, have developed another story about Sayyid Aḥmad's return to Delhi. Their story seems to have been based on their imagination and does not have any relation to the facts. The Muslim nationalist writers of India and Pakistan, including Sindhī, have developed many stories which focus on Sayyid Aḥmad's contribution to Muslim nationalism in India, which led to the creation of Pakistan. In the following section we shall discuss some statements of the nationalist writers in order to clarify the misconception that was created by these statements. This clarification will enable us to focus on our point that Sayyid Aḥmad was a Ṣūfī;

and in the first phase of his movement, he contributed to the religious reform of the Indian Muslims, not to their political nationalism.

I

'Ubaydullāh Sindhī, an Indian nationalist 'ālim, says:

That when the basic ideas of the Walīyullahī movement had been adequately introduced to the masses through the educational, missionary, intellectual and practical efforts of Imām 'Abdul 'Azīz and the members of his Central Committee, it was at that time that Imām 'Abdul 'Azīz was in search of a young man interested in military activities, so that through him he ['Abdul 'Azīz] could have the second part of his revolutionary movement implemented. By God's grace[at that moment] a young man from the family of Sayyid Shāh 'Ilmullāh of Rā'ē Barēlī, Sayyid Ahmad, came to join the war cry of Imām 'Abdul 'Azīz(al-gharaḍ Imām 'Abdul 'Azīz awr unkī markizī jam'iyat ke arkan kī ta'līmī, tablighī awr fikrī awr 'amli jad-o-jihad se Walīyullahī tahrīk ke mubādī kā ta'arruf millat se achī tarah se hū giyā tū us waqt Imām 'Abdul 'Azīz ik ise nū jawān kī rāh dikh rahe the jū 'skarī mu'āmilāt min dilchaspī rakhtā hū tā kih uske dhari'ah apne ingilābī tahrīk ke dusre hissah kī takmil karā'in— Allāh kī rahmat se Rā'ē Barēlī ke Sayyid Shāh 'Ilmullāh ke khāndān kā ik nū jawān, Sayyid Ahmad Imām 'Abdul 'Azīz kī dawwat min sharīk ke liy'e ayā. 1

This statement needs some clarification. We remember that Sindhī had said before that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz sent

Sayyid Ahmad to Amir Khān for military training, but when the latter came to term with the English, the former left the service, because he objected to such a treaty; and² returned to Delhi. Hāfeeẓ Mālik presents the same view. Although Sindhī and Hāfeeẓ Mālik do not give any historical evidence for their previous statements, the present statement of Sindhī seems to be a complete negation of his previous view.

The first idea we get from this statement is that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz had no previous acquaintance with Sayyid Ahmad. It was just a mere coincidence, or God's grace as Sindhī says, that when Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was looking for a young man of soldierly aptitude, Sayyid Ahmad came to join the war cry of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. There is no reference to Rajputana.

Secondly, although Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was the chief exponent of his father's movement for religious reawakening, there was no such organization under his direction which could be termed the "Central Revolutionary Committee". It is true that Shāh Walīyullāh felt very much disturbed by the political turmoil of his time, but his activities and those of his sons were peaceful and intellectual. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and his brothers had a different attitude towards political matters. They seem to have accepted the de facto sovereignty of the East India Company, and they

turned to religious studies. Thus, speaking about the different political attitudes of Shāh Walīyullāh and his sons, Prof. Mujeeb observes that Shāh Walīyullāh "pinned his hope now on Nizāmūl Mulk, now on Najībuddaullah, now on Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī", who would establish his dominion and ensure peace and prosperity.³ "Instead, Shāh Walīullāh's sons, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Shāh Rafī'uddin and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, turned to the study of the Qur'ān, the popularization of religious knowledge, the creation of new aspiration to study, understand and live according to the doctrines of the sharī'ah.⁴"

The difference in the political attitude between Shāh Walīyullāh and his sons is an indication that during the former's time there was still some hope of reviving and restoring Muslim political supremacy, while during the latter's time (early nineteenth century) all such hopes were out of question. Having accepted the political suzerainty of the Company Government, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz maintained a friendly relationship with the English; he allowed the Muslims to cooperate with the English Government. Furthermore, he even permitted his son-in-law, Mawlānā 'Abdul Ḥayy, to accept service under the English.⁵

Thirdly, in the literature dealing with the Walīyullahī movement and the movement inaugurated by Sayyid Aḥmad during the lifetime of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, there is no evidence to

show that these two persons ever spoke of a jihād against either the British or the Sikhs or both. Therefore, without any historical evidence to present Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz as heading a "Revolutionary Committee", to launch a jihād for the liberation of India is mere imagination.

On the basis of their imaginary story, the nationalists have developed the thesis that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz directed Sayyid Ahmad in his militant movement. As a matter of fact, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz had nothing to do with the militant movement of Sayyid Ahmad which was inaugurated after the death of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz.

Another nationalist writer considers that Sayyid Ahmad's movement was a link between those of Sirhindī and Pakistan. Thus he writes: "Sayyid Ahmad's teachings have an indigenous origin. He is a link between the Religio-Political Reform Movement of Orthodox Islām in India as initiated by Mujaddid Alf-i-Sānī and the climax of Muslim reaction and communalism resulting in the creation of Pakistan."⁶

Sirhindī was primarily a Šūfī, and so was Sayyid Ahmad. As far as their Šūfī teachings are concerned, certainly there is similarity, as we shall see later. But as for the political ideas of Sayyid Ahmad, there^{is}/hardly any basis for linking them with those of Sirhindī. We know that Naqshbandī tarīqah considered it not only permissible

but imperative to establish contact with the rulers and to attempt to influence their thought and policies. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī had relations with the Mughal court. He wrote some recommendatory letters to Mughal officials demanding the implementation of the sharī'ah by the state. But the principal concern of Sirhindī was problems of taṣawwuf which he expressed through his letters (maktubāt) and other writings. Thus, Dr. Friedman observes that with the exception of "the few letters to Mughal officials in which he [Sirhindī] demanded the strict implementation of the sharī'ah by the state,... the overwhelming majority of Sirhindī's letters and other works deal with questions of taṣawwuf..."⁷

Sirhindī's concern for the Muslims was very general. He talked very little about Muslims in the Indian context. To consider him as one who was imbued with communal thinking or who aspired to found a state for the Indian Muslim nation is an imagination of the present century. Hence Friedman remarks:

Sirhindī's present significance for Indian and Pakistani Muslims is a result of his image as the restorer of orthodoxy and reviver of 'pure' Islām. This image, which developed in modern historical writing since the Tadhkirah of Abu'l-Kalām Āzād, reflects twentieth century developments in the Indian subcontinent rather than the seventeenth century thought of Aḥmad Sirhindī himself, who was primarily a Ṣūfī and not a thinker interested in the relationship between religion and state between Muslims and Hindus. The latter questions constitute only

a peripheral element in his thought. 8

The above statement clears the confusion about the image of Sirhindī in the estimation of Indo-Pakistani Muslims. The statement also helps us assert our contention that there was no political link between the ideas and thoughts of Sirhindī and Sayyid Aḥmad.

Another nationalist writes, "Shāh Waliullāh's immediate problem was the rising tide of the Maratha and Jat aggression. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Sayyid Aḥmad were called upon to deal with the Sikhs and the British."⁹

As we have seen before that there is no historical evidence to show that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Sayyid Aḥmad struggled against the British and the Sikhs during former's lifetime. The relationship between these two persons was purely spiritual. In Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, the collection of Sayyid Aḥmad's sayings, we have references to Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz only in connection with spiritual matters. Moreover, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm does not contain any idea of Sayyid Aḥmad which can be termed as anti-British and anti-Sikh.

We have cited above a few examples of Indo-Pakistani Muslim nationalists' view about Sayyid Aḥmad's role. There are many examples of similar nature. The nationalists' attitude towards Sayyid Aḥmad is apologetic; it gives him credit which does not have any historical basis. To speak

of Muslim nationalism in India before the thirties of the present century is a mistake from the historical point of view. To credit Sayyid Aḥmad with making contribution to Muslim nationalism in the early nineteenth-century India is a mere imagination of the Muslim nationalists. During the first phase of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad concerned himself exclusively with religious reform activities, as we shall see shortly. Questions of Muslim nationalism in India and Pakistan movement were far from Sayyid Aḥmad's thinking.

II

In the foregoing pages we have tried to explain the confusion that was created by the Indo-Pakistani Muslim nationalists about Sayyid Aḥmad's role. It may be emphasized that Sayyid Aḥmad was a Ṣūfī; he returned to Delhi from Tonk as a Ṣūfī and not as a political revolutionary or military general. It may also be stressed that it was Sayyid Aḥmad's religious quality not military sagacity, which impressed Amīr Khān and his son, Wazīr-ud-Dawlah; as a result both of them became his devoted disciples, and Sayyid Aḥmad was appointed as imām. Prince Wazīr-ud-Dawlah even accompanied Sayyid Aḥmad to Delhi. Sayyid Aḥmad maintained most cordial relations with them until the end of his life.¹⁰ Here we have, therefore, an answer to those who consider that Sayyid Aḥmad's exit from Amīr Khān's service was the result of his difference with Amīr Khān on the question of

signing the treaty with the British.

It is said that prior to arrival of Sayyid Aḥmad at Delhi, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz dreamed of the Prophet Muḥammad coming to the Jāmi' Mosque of Delhi. This was interpreted by Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, a famous Naqshbandī Ṣūfī, as meaning that the Sunnah of the Prophet would be revived, either through Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz or through one of his disciples. A week later, when Sayyid Aḥmad arrived in Delhi as a perfect Ṣūfī, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz considered the interpretation of his vision to have been correct.

This story of the dream is important in many respects. Firstly, it indicates the spiritual status of Sayyid Aḥmad. Secondly, and more important, it indicates what Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz wanted from Sayyid Aḥmad. It clearly falsifies the assertion of Muslim nationalist writers that Sayyid Aḥmad returned to Delhi to give leadership to the militant programme of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. On the contrary, the dream indicates that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz must have expected that through Sayyid Aḥmad the Prophetic Sunnah, rather the religion of Islām in India, would receive a new lease on life. Thus, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz visualized that a religious reform movement by Sayyid Aḥmad was almost imminent. Moreover, this dream also indicates that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz had no previous knowledge about Sayyid Aḥmad's coming to Delhi, whereas the nationalists claim that prior to his coming to

Delhi from Rajputana, he informed 'Abdul 'Azīz through a letter about Amīr Khān's alliance with the English and his (Sayyid Aḥmad's) return to Delhi.

Thirdly, the emphasis on the revival of Prophetic Sunnah suggests to us something about the nature of the movement Sayyid Aḥmad was about to launch. We have said before that the Ṣūfīs consider Prophet's person and his activities as having a spiritual or esoteric significance, besides exoteric, which the Ṣūfīs strive to attain. Moreover, during the period under study, it was Ṣūfīsm which became the most corrupt religious organization. The spiritual vitality of Ṣūfīsm ebbed; the Ṣūfī orders degenerated from mystic perception to gullible superstition. The heretic Ṣūfīs were spreading un-Islāmic abuses into Muslim life. Sayyid Aḥmad strongly condemned these Ṣūfīs.

Furthermore, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, himself a Ṣūfī, must have been very anxious to see Ṣūfīsm, as an important religious organization, reformed, although he himself had grown too old by that time to do anything. We can conclude that the movement Sayyid Aḥmad was about to launch was to be a Ṣūfī reform movement, not a Muslim political struggle.

On his arrival at Delhi, Sayyid Aḥmad took residence in the old Akbarābādī Mosque, where he had lived before. It seems that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was not the only person to

have recognized the spiritual achievements of Sayyid Aḥmad, other members of the family of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz have also recognized his (Sayyid Aḥmad) spiritual eminence. As a consequence, at least three important members of the house of Shāh Walīyullāh, namely, Mawlawī Muḥammad Yūsuf, Mawlānā ‘Abdul Ḥayy and Shāh Ismā‘īl, gave bay‘at to Sayyid Aḥmad at the initial stage of his reforming career. Afterwards many other persons of this house accepted him as their pīr.¹²

This event ushered in a new era both in the life of Sayyid Aḥmad himself and in the history of Indian Islām. His position was quickly acknowledged in the circle of Shāh Walīyullāh. It is true that whatever spiritual attainment Sayyid Aḥmad might have had achieved, he would not have attracted people's attention outside the Delhi circle so quickly, if the members of the Walīyullahī family had not become his first disciples. In other words, but for Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz and other members of his family, Sayyid Aḥmad would not have come to the fore, at least for some time. In this connection we may accept the remark of Dr. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn. He says: "On the advice of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, two of his close relations— his nephew Shāh Ismā‘īl Shahīd and his son-in-law, Maulavī ‘Abdul Ḥai— accepted the Sayyid as their spiritual guide. It was no ordinary matter for both these luminaries of the house of Shāh Walīullāh to own allegiance to a comparatively less known and less

learned person. This alone was sufficient to make him the centre of attraction for a large number of people.¹³ Another writer observes:

The veneration with which these two learned and polished Doctors of the Law publicly treated Sayyid Ahmad,... first attracted popular attention to the future prophet. Their profound acquaintance with the patristic Literature of Islām enabled them publicly to support the Sayyid's title, which they themselves acknowledged. Starting with a popular belief that God from time to time sends Imām, or leaders, to quicken the faith of His children, and to guide the masses of mankind to salvation, they proved that Sayyid Ahmad had all the marks of such a divinely commissioned envoy. ¹⁴

Sayyid Ahmad's reputation as an eminent Sūfī and religious divine soon spread outside the Delhi circle of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. Many persons gathered together in the presence of Sayyid Ahmad to give bay'at; and many letters of invitation began to pour into Delhi requesting him to visit distant places. In a previous chapter we have seen how hopeless was the religio-social situation of Muslim India during the period under consideration. Against that background, it was almost natural for the people to rush to an individual or to a particular place from whence came rays of hopes for spiritual guidance. The assemblage of wandering pious souls in the Walīyullahī circle, was an example of such a response. Two religious personalities of the early nineteenth century— Sayyid Ahmad of Rā'ē Barēlī

and Hājī Shariʿatullāh of Bengal— attracted the attention of Muslims who were religiously bankrupt and morally degenerate and whose hearts were longing for guidance. Therefore, some time in 1818 Sayyid Aḥmad embarked upon a tour of the Doāb Area (the region between the Rivers Ganges and Jumna). Many relations of Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and other prominent people from different Ṣūfī orders, like Shāh Abū Saʿid, the khalīfah¹⁵ of Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī of the Naqshbandī order, accompanied him.

This tour of Sayyid Aḥmad has been mentioned in a recent work as an embarking "upon jihād against social evils and religious innovations." ¹⁶ Dr. Mushir-ul-Ḥaqq has called Sayyid Aḥmad's religious reform endeavour a jihād on the basis of the definition and classification of jihād given by Shāh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz. He said:

"Jihād is of three kinds. The first is verbal jihād (jihād-i zubānī). It means that people should be invited towards Islām, and that the sharʿ should be explained, and sermons and preaching should be undertaken, and the objection and doubts of the opponents (mukhālifīn) should be removed, and thus Islām should be manifested.

"The second kind of jihād is the preparation for fighting. It means to frighten the opponents by recruiting volunteers, and by increasing the number of the people of Islām and by creating confusion among the opponents and by spending money to provide horses, camels and necessary

arms and ammunition.

"The third kind of jihād is to kill the opponents with spears and swords and to wrestle and combat with them.

"There is no doubt that the Prophet was busy only with the first two kinds of jihād. He did not take part in the third kind of jihād. And surely this third one is the lowest kind of jihād.¹⁷"

We can see how excellent is the definition of jihād given by Sayyid Aḥmad's spiritual guide, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. And during his lifetime, his faithful murīd, Sayyid Aḥmad, strove to carry out only first category of jihād i.e., verbal jihād both in spirit and meaning.

But later Muslim writers, who were caught by the fever of nationalism, not only overlooked this beautiful definition of jihād, but distorted and misinterpreted all statements of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the most exalted religious personality of his time. The Muslim nationalist writers do not seem to have any regard for the different meanings and categories of jihād as given by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. On the contrary, they take the word jihād only to mean qitāl (fighting with arms) and emphasize that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz deputed Sayyid Aḥmad to fight (qitāl) the infidels.

On the eve of Sayyid Aḥmad's departure on the tour of the Doāb Area, in response to invitations he had received,

Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz robed him in a white gown and a black¹⁸ turban, and offered him a stick.

It is a Šūfī tradition that when a murīd is granted permission by his pīr to take bay‘at from the masses, the latter offers a khil‘ah(complete dress) to the former, acknowledging him as his khalīfah(spiritual successor). But this event has been misinterpreted by some nationalist writers who say that ‘Abdul ‘Azīz himself was thinking of carrying out jihād personally against the Sikh oppression, but was disabled by old age and weak sight; when Sayyid Aḥmad left Delhi to enroll followers, ‘Abdul ‘Azīz robed¹⁹ Sayyid Aḥmad and sent him off.

Our contention is that Sayyid Aḥmad was a Šūfī; on the eve of launching his Šūfī reform movement, he was granted khilāfat name by his pīr, Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, to receive bay‘at from the masses. Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz and Sayyid Aḥmad were not interested in the question of jihād(in the meaning of qitāl) against either the British or the Sikhs, and there was no revolutionary committee under Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz to launch a holy war. Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz favoured the first category of jihād as he defined it, and Sayyid Aḥmad must have acted in conformity with the lesson he had received from his spiritual guide. As to the armed conflict of Sayyid Aḥmad with the Sikhs, which took place after the death of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, the latter had nothing to do with that.

Sayyid Ahmad's fight with the Sikhs must have been conditioned by some factors for which we do not have any information in Sirāt-i Mustagīm. That event should be studied in the light of these factors.

Sayyid Ahmad left for the Doāb Area together with at least twenty persons in November, 1818. Sayyid Ahmad's fame was travelling before him, and wherever he arrived, people welcomed him and began to become his murīds and promised to give up all un-Islāmic practices. In some places, such as Ghāzīābād, he received an unprecedented ovation from the enthusiastic people who turned up in thousands to give him bay'at.

Speaking about the objective of Sayyid Ahmad on that tour, Mihr says: "In course of the tour, Sayyid Ahmad had two objectives in his mind: first, to purge the convictions and the actions of the Muslims; second, to assess the possibility of a favourable situation for invitation to jihād." ²⁰

We have already said that in the absence of any clear evidence relating to jihād, it is by the imagination of the writers that every action of Sayyid Ahmad at this stage is connected with his militant movement of a later phase. The impression we get from the writings of different authors is that the reform of his movement was a secondary matter; his primary objective was to organize a jihād, and the tour was undertaken not with the view of preaching Islām as such, but rather for

collecting fighters. The crux of the problem in the attitude of these writers seems to be that they apparently are not willing to see two phases in Sayyid Aḥmad's movement. Their endeavour to deal with both phases of his movement is probably to keep Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz entangled in the militant movement of Sayyid Aḥmad. In other words, they wish to maintain a continuity between the political ideas of Shāh Walīyullāh and Sayyid Aḥmad, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz being the chief exponent of his father's movement, on the one hand, and being Sayyid Aḥmad's teacher and guide, on the other hand. Such an idea helps them to maintain their thesis that Sayyid Aḥmad carried to a climax the political ideas of Walīyullāhī movement under the guidance of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. We have, however, tried to show with evidence that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was an 'ālim-ṣūfī, peaceful writer, and was not anti-British.

We have said before that the superstitious acts, social vices were diffused mostly among the illiterate Muslims of the smaller towns and villages. They were victims of heretic Ṣūfīs. Sayyid Aḥmad gave special attention to these people, though he did not overlook others. Dr. 'Azīz Aḥmad says: "Unlike the generality of 'ulamā' and most of the Ṣūfīs, he chose his sphere of operation, not the spiritual or intellectual elite, but the Muslim masses in general whom he contacted in cities, towns and villages during his tours and travels." In villages especially he came across sections of Muslim population, presumably converts

from Hindus of a few generations ago, who were Muslims in name only, but whose faith and rites of worship were Hinduized, syncretic, animistic and superstitious. In our discussion of the background in a previous chapter, we have seen that this kind of Muslims were living in rural areas all over India.²²

Sayyid Ahmad's appearance among these people had its effect. He perhaps thought that mere words from a distant place would not be effective in eradicating the vices which were deeply rooted in Muslim life. He probably felt it better to present himself personally to the people whom he hoped to influence both by his personal examples and his words. His emphasis on the practical aspect of religious life seems to be the basis of his decision to go to the people personally. Considering the response of the people to his call, his approach to the problem appears to have been an effective one.

Sayyid Ahmad continued his tour with extreme vigour and religious enthusiasm.²³ Apart from meeting people individually and in groups and admonishing them to lead a purely Islāmic way of life, he used to hold regular meetings for preaching his ideas wherever he went. Shāh Ismā'īl and Mawlānā 'Abdul Hayy took the initiative in delivering sermons.²⁴ Unfortunately their sermons (khutbāt) have not been recorded, otherwise they would constitute a valuable source of information about the teachings and ideas of the movement.

Sayyid Ahmad was a Šūfī religious reformer. But he acted differently from the traditional Šūfī way. Commenting on his reforming tour of the Doāb Area, Mihr observes:

This tour was apparently like that of a pīr and the sons of pīr, that is, he used to move from town to town and village to village with a group of murīds. Everywhere he received invitations; bay'at was taken regularly; and like the general pīrs tawajjuh was given forming a circle of followers. But in some particular respects this tour was completely different from those of the general pīrs' sons. For example, sermons were delivered regularly in which emphasis was put on the avoidance of bid'at (innovations) and muhdithāt (corruptions). The virtues of Islām were explained in such a convincing way that the hearers would accept them. The un-Islāmic practices that had penetrated into Muslim life were explained with extreme clarity; un-Islāmic names were changed, e.g., Imām Bakhsh was changed into Imām-ud-Dīn. 25

This is an important statement in the sense that it illustrates how Sayyid Ahmad being a Šūfī was assuming a changing role. From his movements and activities, it appears that Sayyid Ahmad was demonstrating how to shake off the traditional mode of living as was the custom with the Šūfīs. He displayed much dynamism during his public life. Although he was a Šūfī in the Indian environment, he did not have any khangah; he tried to awaken and arouse the Muslims, who were steeped in religious, social and moral vices, by personal contact and preaching for which he undertook long tours to remote villages and towns. By

his teachings, he tried to free Muslim minds from medieval shackles, as we shall see later. His moral force was a matter of special attraction for the Muslims.

IV

We remember that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz granted formal ijāzah to Sayyid Aḥmad to receive bay'at from people. We know that both Shāh Waliyullāh and 'Abdul 'Azīz had themselves initiated into three important Ṣūfī ṭurūq prevalent in India, namely, Chishtīyah, Qādrīyah and Naqshbandīyah; and in their turn, they also initiated their murīds into all three ṭurūq. Sayyid Aḥmad was initiated into three ṭurūq by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz.

Sayyid Aḥmad following the tradition of his pīr, received bay'at from people in the three Ṣūfī ṭurūq mentioned above. But he did not stop there. In his desire to make the Muslims into perfect Muslims, in conformity with the totality of the religio-mystical complex, he went one step forward and introduced another form of Ṣūfīsm into his system. This is what he called Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah (the way of Muḥammad). It seems that he was concerned with more than the esoteric experiences (bāṭinī ashghāl) of a Muslim; unless the exoteric disciplines (zāhirī a'māl) of a Muslim are blended together with his esoteric experiences, one could

not be a perfect Muslim. In other words, he believed that neither ṭarīqah nor sharī'at alone is all-comprehensive, providing means to perfection; rather, the combination of both is necessary. This point becomes clear in Sayyid Aḥmad's explanation of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah.

In his explanation of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah, Sayyid Aḥmad emphasized that every action of life should be in accord with pleasure of God, e.g., the object of marriage should be to keep oneself safe from corruptions; business or service should be done in order to provide oneself and one's family with legal provisions; the comfort of night should enable one to devote oneself to meditation; people should eat with a hope of gaining enough strength for service to God, such as saying the prayers, keeping the fast, going on Hajj and, when necessary fighting the jihād. Therefore, in all walks of life the object should be devotion to God and obedience to His commandments. In other words, every individual should be a practical example of the Qur'ānic verse: inna ṣalātī wa nusukī wa mahyāy'ī wa mamātī lillāh Rabbī al-ʿalāmīn (Q. S.6: 162/163; "Lo! My worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the Universe").

Mawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah has written in his Wasāyā that once Sayyid Aḥmad was asked by ʿAtaullāh and Miyān Muḥammad Muqīm, while on his tour to Rāmpūr: "We do not know the

reason why you take bay'at in Chishtī, Qādrī and Naqshbandī turūq and then in the Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah?" Sayyid Ahmad explained in reply: "The rituals(ashghāl) of Chishtī, Qādrī, Naqshbandī and Mujaddadī turūq instruct how to perform darb(spiritual beating) and what are the different latā'if. And these turūq are related to the Prophet esoterically.

"The disciplines of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah", he continued, "are taught in this way: eat for this purpose; dress for this purpose; grow crops for this purpose; marry for this purpose..., and the relation of this tarīqah to the Prophet is exoteric, that is, emphasising the performance of outward activities in conformity with the sharī'ah."²⁷

This is all that Sayyid Ahmad has clarified about his idea of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah. It is evident from his explanation that this tarīqah had no rituals like other Şūfī orders. It was not any Şūfī order. It was a new way of Şūfī teaching. But it appears that from the very name, many writers have mistakenly accepted it as one of the Şūfī orders of India.²⁸ In the fourth chapter of Şirāt-i Mustaqīm Sayyid Ahmad describes the process of acquiring the excellences of the Rāh-i Nabuwat. But Ikrām seems to have been mistaken in naming it Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah.²⁹ As a matter of fact, nowhere in Şirāt-i Mustaqīm is there any mention of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah explicit or implicit. We have seen before that the disciplines of the four main Şūfī orders of India have

been discussed in Sirāt-i Mustadīm in some detail. But still there is no mention of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah.

In the Encyclopaedia of Islām Massignon mentions "Muhammadiyah" "as a devotional artificial isnād referring to the Prophet without intermediary: utilized in XVI th century by 'Alī Khawwāṣ and Sha'rānī, also used in connection with the recitation of Dalā'il of Djazulī." ³⁰

This statement tells us the fact that it was "a devotional artificial isnād", utilized for a purpose which has no particular reference to regular Ṣūfī orders. Why Sayyid Aḥmad used it in the early nineteenth century, we shall discuss later.

In order to remove the confusion created by some writers about Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah (saying that Sayyid Aḥmad founded a new Ṣūfī order), we may examine the problem by an investigation from another angle. Let us see what are the characteristics of a Ṣūfī order. We may take the Chishtī order as a typical case. The following are the salient features:-

1. Establishment of khangahs, jamā'at khānas and zawiyahs; 2. a hierarchy of saints in the order with definite spiritual territories (wilāyat) in different gaṣbahs and districts; 3. the Chief Saint at the centre stood at the apex of the whole system and controlled a network of khangahs

spread over the country; 4. territorial distributions, i.e., sphere of spiritual influence between two contemporary orders; 5. importance of regalia including some of the articles of the Chief Saint, e.g., i) the pitched frock, ii) the prayer-carpet, iii) the wooden sandals, iv) the rosary and v) the stick; constituted the mystic insignia which was given to khalīfahs; 6. a written khilāfat namah; rituals, such as the practice of bowing before the Shaykh; circulating zanbīl; shaving the head of new entrants to the mystic circle; sama' and the chillah-i ma'kus; dhikr; the routine of super-erogatory prayers and fasts; darb; lesson on latā'if-i qalb etc. And finally, as one of the stages of the spiritual journey a novice is supposed to stay alone in a closed room for forty days.

We know from Sirāt-i Mustaqīm that Sayyid Aḥmad neither practised any of the above mentioned features nor had them prescribed for his disciples, although they were followers of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah and at the same time were initiated by him into the Chishtī Tarīqah. Sayyid Aḥmad did not prescribe any course of esoteric mystic discipline or spiritual exercise for Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah.

It has been noted before that although Sayyid Aḥmad was a Ṣūfī in the Indian environment by adoption and learning, in practical life he was altogether different from the traditional Ṣūfis. We remember his objection to Shāh 'Abdul

'Azīz's teaching of taṣawwur-i Shaykh. He taught a reformed or neo-Ṣūfīsm which was simple, and emphasized on the practical aspect of religious and moral life. It was this feature which carried the real significance of his reform movement through Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah as we shall see shortly. He retained a very simple pīrī-murīdī relationship as a pious Ṣūfī heritage. He appointed khalīfahs without giving any written khilāfat nāmah or insignia as was the custom of Ṣūfī orders in connection with the appointment of khalīfahs.

In fine, we may accept the observation of a scholar made in a recent work about Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah. He says: "This tarīqah was not, however, an old established order.
 31
 This was Sayyid Aḥmad's own invention."

Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah is not mentioned in any Ṣūfī literature. It is not any new order. It is mentioned only in connection with eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries Muslim reform movements, which signalized a general spiritual build-up against general degeneration in Muslim life. The name Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah was used by the Arabian Wahhābīs,
 32
 by Sayyid Aḥmad and by the African Ṣūfī reform movements. Having likened Sayyid Aḥmad's puritanical movement with that of Arabian Wahhābīs, a German scholar observes: "Aḥmad Bralwī, too, started, with the spiritual help of Walīullāh's followers, a fight against corrupt practices and innovations, without, however, leaving mysticism aside. He himself was

mystically inclined, and the movement which he founded and called ṭarīqa muḥammadiya, may be compared, to some extent, to the similar movements in North Africa, like the ṭarīqa muḥammadiya of Sayyid Idrīs or the Tijaniya.³³"

Although no causal connection is visible among these movements, they were analogous, and they described themselves by the term Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah. This is a reformed Ṣūfī organization. This neo-Ṣūfism was characterized by some striking features, such as purification of religion; acceptance of ijtihād and rejection of taglīd; moral activism and militarism.

The puritanical movements of Sayyid Aḥmad and of other leaders,³⁴ mentioned above, based on the Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah, freed Ṣūfism of medieval accretions (except the Arabian Wahhābism which rejected Ṣūfism totally), and enforced the content of orthodox religion. Thus a renowned scholar says: "The reform of Ṣūfism under orthodox pressure—both from within and from outside Ṣūfism— resulted in a phenomenon wherein Ṣūfism was largely stripped of its ecstatic and metaphysical character and content which were replaced by a content which was nothing else than the postulates of the orthodox religion... through it Ṣūfism was made to serve the activist impulse of orthodox Islām and is a ubiquitous fact in all the major forms of pre-Modernist reform movements."³⁵

By this reformation, while on the one hand, the irregular or bi-shara' medieval Şūfī orders were rejected as corrupt, Şūfīsm was affirmed, on the other hand, and was sought to be purified by a recourse to the inner, spiritual and moral life of the Prophet.

Thus Sayyid Aḥmad and other exponents of reformed Şūfīsm earnestly urged the Muslims to follow the path laid down by the Prophet Muḥammad(Tarīqah'-i Muḥammadiyah) and do away with all superstitious activities introduced or encouraged by medieval Şūfī orders which were aberrant. Thus Tarīqah'-i Muḥammadiyah set right a new direction to the religious life of the Muslims. Dr. Fazlur Raḥmān remarks, "The inner revolution this name signifies is tantamount to the assertion that Şūfīsm must follow the path laid out by the Prophet, i.e. must conform to the strict Sunnah of the Prophet and give up its medieval antinomian manifestations. This means that orthodox beliefs and norms will be taught and practised under the form of a Şūfī organization and with the use of some Şūfī techniques." ³⁶

The second feature of Tarīqah'-i Muḥammadiyah is its insistence on the right of ijtihād(independent reasoning) and rejection of taqlīd(precisely, to follow the decision of the Muslim jurists). This fact acted as a great liberating force. It freed Muslim minds from the shackles of medieval period. It opened the door for more liberal forces

in the modern times to interpret the Qur'ān and the Hadīth more freely than the pre-Modernist reformers themselves.

In the Indian context, for example, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, the first real Indian modernist, waged his intellectual jihād against medieval beliefs and practices. He concerned himself with getting rid the Muslim community of evils flowing from the miracle-mongering doctrines and practices of medieval popular Ṣūfīsm. To achieve this goal, he adopted two methods, namely, liberal and scientific interpretation of the sources of religion and introduction of modern education. Emphasizing on the need to reject the taqlīd and accept the principle of ijtihād, Sir Sayyid said: "If people do not shun blind adherence, if they do not seek that Light which can be found in the Qur'ān and the indisputable Hadīth, and do not adjust religion and the sciences of today, Islām will become extinct in India." ³⁷

It may be recalled here that in order to exercise ijtihād, Sayyid Aḥmad emphasized on the need of finding genuine Hadīth of the Prophet. In the same spirit, Sir Sayyid insisted on distinguishing between genuine Hadīth from the non-genuine. Although the pre-modernist reformer Sayyid Aḥmad could not interpret the Qur'ān, but his insistence on the right of ijtihād paved the way for the modernist Sir Sayyid to shoulder that task. Sir Sayyid applied reason

for the interpretation of the Qur'ān. He demythologized the mythological expressions of the Qur'ān, such as the angels, iblis, etc., and described them as symbolical expressions.

The acceptance of the principle of ijtihād paved the way even for the pre-modernist reformers to some extent to adopt a dynamic attitude towards religion. We know from Sirāt-i Mustaqīm that Sayyid Ahmad condemned the mugallidīn and urged the Muslims to turn to the authority of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah for guidance.

Moral motivation is another important feature of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah organization. Sayyid Ahmad voiced strongest words at the moral degradation into which the Muslim community had been falling over the centuries during which heretic Šūfism had become the principal factor of Muslim socio-religious life. He held the corrupt Šūfīs responsible for Muslim moral degradation. The moral teaching of Sayyid Ahmad (and other reformers of his time) was more in relation to this-worldly values than to the world hereafter, as we shall see.

The tone of the reform-endeavours of the Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah organization in terms of moral positivism and social welfare is an important trend which helped adopt an attitude of moral and religious positivism. Although this

trend could not transform the whole community immediately, still the fact remains that the reformers advocating Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah or a neo-Ṣūfism set in motion a fresh turn to religious feeling concerning more towards reconstructing a welfare society than to securing reward in the world hereafter. Emphasizing the significance of the trend mentioned above, Fazlur Raḥmān says:

The fact cannot be denied that the leaders of these movements themselves gave a fresh turn to the religious feeling geared more towards the rebuilding of a good and moral society than to securing a place in paradise, although, of course, the two were not seen as divorced from one another. The net result of this trend among the more enlightened strata of society was an orientation towards a positive attitude to this world and its moral, social and economic problems than towards eschatological issues. It was this kind of preparation upon which the influences of modern education and life supervened and wherein they found a ready base. 38

The last feature of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah organization is militarism. We know that all the movements under consideration, with the exception of the Arabian Wahhābīs, starting as a puritanical religious reform movement, ultimately turned into a military movement against non-Muslim forces.

In the case of Sayyid Aḥmad, we know that during the second phase of his movement, that is, after his return from the Hajj(1824) when he decided to wage a jihād(qitāl)

against the Sikhs, he did not have to organize a group of mujāhidīn (holy warriors) afresh. Some hundreds of his spiritual followers also accepted his political views. It was then an easy task for him quickly to muster some six hundred persons from his Tarīqah'-i Muhammadiyah, who accompanied him on a perilous voyage to the North-West Frontier Region to fight the Sikhs.

Despite all the good results of the Tarīqah'-i Muhammadiyah organization, as mentioned above, there are some points of demerits of this organization. Firstly, the leaders of neo-Şūfism could never make any relaxation in their extreme orthodox Şūfistic attitude. Had there been any change in their attitude, their movements would have been widened in dimension and a better result could be expected in the immediate period.

Secondly, the express object of the leaders of Tarīqah'-i Muhammadiyah was to unite the whole community for a reformist purpose. Since their neo-Şūfism could not entirely displace medieval Şūfism from the Muslim society of their own time, they created division and sub-division in the community. The reformed Şūfism became the mode of life only for the followers of this Tarīqah. The medieval Şūfism remained religious life for the vast majority of the Muslims until modern education and the impact of western ideas joined hands with the pre-modernist reformism in an effort

to dislodge the medieval form of Ṣūfīsm gradually.

But the division that was created by the leaders of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah persisted for some time. In the Indian context, we remember that in the later part of the nineteenth century the Wahhābīsm was denounced by persons like Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī and Nawāb 'Abdul Laṭīf. Dr. Smith says that the later "Wahhābīs" who were denounced by the Calcutta Literary Society of Nawāb 'Abdul Laṭīf, attacked⁴⁰ the other Muslims as the traitors of Islām. The later Indian "Wahhābīs" considered themselves as a distinct group of Muslims, separate from the larger Muslim community.

Hence we may conclude that Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah organization failed to effect a spiritual and religious unity in the Muslim community of India, although it was the overt purpose of the leaders of the movement.

V

We turn to the reforming activities of Sayyid Aḥmad while he was touring. During the tour of the Doāb, in his preaching to the people, he concentrated on eradicating innovations which were imbedded in Muslim society at that time. He urged the Muslims to do away with the superstitious acts they had been practising in those days. Thousands of people responded to his call(da'awāt) and accepted him as

their spiritual guide by performing bay'at and promised to follow his teachings.

From the activities of Sayyid Aḥmad, we see that the tour was undertaken in order to propagate and preach the ideas and teachings of his Ṣūfī-religious reform struggle rather than for any military purpose. But 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī believes that this tour of Sayyid Aḥmad was arranged by Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz who asked him to go and take bay'at of jihād from the people on Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz's behalf against the British.⁴¹ Ḥāfeeẓ Mālik emphasizes the same view.⁴² But the available sources regarding this tour do not agree with these statements. The sole message of his preaching is a plea that the people come back to the teachings of Islām and give up innovations.

After about seven months preaching in the Doāb Area, Sayyid Aḥmad changed the region. In May, 1819, Sayyid Aḥmad went back to Rā'ē Parēlī to mourn the death of his brother, Sayyid Ishāq. After a short stay at home, Sayyid Aḥmad took another long tour to Allāhābād, Benaras, Kanpūr, Naṣīrābād and Sultānpūr, and finally to Lucknow on the invitation of the Deputy of the State of Awādh. The nature of this tour was in general the same as the tour of the Doāb Area. Bay'ah was taken regularly, khutbāt were delivered as usual.⁴³ Throughout the tour, thousands accepted him as pīr, and thousands are reported to have accepted Islām under his

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urging.

During his stay at Rā'ē Barēlī, he effected an important social reform by setting personal example. The Hindu social practice which prohibited the remarriage of widows, had crept into Muslim life long before and was so deep-rooted that none had the moral courage to raise a voice against it. We have discussed above the attitude of Luṭfullāh's mother to her second marriage. Such an attitude was the common phenomenon with Indian Muslims. Sayyid Aḥmad was determined to enforce the reform of the practice at his own home to begin with. Consequently, ⁴⁵he married the widow of his elder brother, Sayyid Ishāq. In this connection, Mawlānā 'Abdul Ḥayy delivered a khutbah explaining the significance of the Qur'ānic verse: "You would not find a community who believes in God and the Last Day, that would love the adversaries of God and His Apostle, although they are their fathers or sons or brothers or closest relatives." One by one, Mawlānā 'Abdul Ḥayy pointed out the un-Islāmic ⁴⁶customs practised even in the families of Shāh Walīyullāh and Shāh 'Ilmullāh. Apparently 'Abdul Ḥayy reminding Sayyid Aḥmad about his obligation in the light of the above mentioned Qur'ānic verse; that is to say, that Sayyid Aḥmad should not show any leniency to his family ('Ilmullāhī family) and that of Shāh Walīyullāh on the question of any un-Islāmic practice. Sayyid Aḥmad, realizing the implication of 'Abdul Ḥayy's khutbah, is said to have reiterated his firm determi-

nation to follow the commandments of God and to act according to the Prophet's Sunnah without showing any regard for those who did not act in the same way. He mentioned the name of Sayyid Muḥammad Ya'qūb, his most affectionate nephew, son of Sayyid Ibrāhīm, saying that he would not hesitate to dissociate with the latter in case he did not follow the commands of God and practise the Sunnah of the Prophet.⁴⁷

On the authority of "Waḡā'i' Aḥmadī", Nadwī related a dream of Sayyid Aḥmad in connection with this marriage. The vision was interpreted in the light of the evil of widow non-marriage, to be a command to remove the evil by the joint effort of Sayyid Aḥmad and his sister-in-law.⁴⁸ After Sayyid Aḥmad's example, the remarriage of widows began to become common in Muslim society. It is stated that Sayyid Aḥmad asked his new wife to distribute sweets among the women folk and to publicise her second marriage as widely as possible so that contempt for it would be removed from their minds, and they would consider it as a Sunnah of the Prophet. Sayyid Aḥmad himself gave publicity to his action through personal letters to Delhi, Phult,⁴⁹ Rāmpūr and other places. Shāh Ismā'īl actually persuaded his old widowed sister, Ruḡayah, to marry Mawlānā 'Abdul Ḥayy.⁵⁰

During his stay at Rā'ē Barēlī, Sayyid Aḥmad's courageous intervention prevented an almost Shī'ah-Sunni clash at Naṣīrābād.⁵¹ It is stated that the Shī'ah mujtahid,

Sayyid Dildār 'Alī(d.1820), planned a Shī'ah procession to pass through the predominantly Sunnī areas of Naṣīrābād on the 8th of Muharram 1234/1819, in order to provoke Sunnī sentiment, on the one hand, and to demonstrate his position, on the other hand. The two rival Muslim sections of Naṣīrābād were thus about to come in clash. Sayyid Aḥmad was informed of the impending danger. He went there and brought about a settlement by peaceful negotiations. An agreement was signed between the two sections in which the Shī'ah government of Awādh was also represented. One story says that Mu'tamid-ud-Dawlah, the Deputy of Awādh, remitted Rs. 2,000 to Sayyid Aḥmad as a gift which he politely declined to accept, because in his effort to bring about the peace no money was spent.⁵²

Sayyid Aḥmad's fame as a reformer had already spread in all quarters. This particular event made him known in Shī'ah quarters as a man capable of dealing with a serious situation. Mu'tamid-ud-Dawlah's invitation to Sayyid Aḥmad to visit Lucknow, as has been mentioned above, appears to have been based on this background. Considering the fact that Sayyid Aḥmad bitterly criticised Shī'ah practices, as we shall see later, any invitation to him from the Shī'ah government of Lucknow would not have been expected normally.⁵³

In any case, Sayyid Aḥmad must have considered the invitation as a golden opportunity which would contribute to the extension of his influence particularly among the

Shī'ah. With a large number of disciples, he went to Lucknow. On his arrival at Lucknow, Sayyid Aḥmad began his preaching with full vigour. He received bay'at from thousands of people. There were some very important personalities among his new disciples, such as Mawlānā Wilāyat 'Alī 'Azimābādī, who carried the second phase of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement after his death, and Mawlawī Imām-ud-Dīn of Bengal, who spread the movement particularly in Lower Bengal. At least two Hindus are reported to have accepted Islām.⁵⁴ Some Shī'ahs are also reported to have given Sayyid Aḥmad bay'at for which reason Mu'tamid-ud-Dawlah asked him to leave the city.

We have discussed Sayyid Aḥmad's stay in Rā'ē Barēlī and Lucknow in some detail. This discussion reveals that he was engaged in reform activities. It is also known that on his way to Rā'ē Barēlī, he preached reform. We do not have any information about any political activity. But one nationalist writer gives a different story. He says, "When Shahīd returned to Rāi Barēlī to mourn the death of his elder brother, and to visit relatives whom he had not seen for ten years, he continued to preach on his way about the necessity of an all-out war for the liberation of Dār-ul-Islām."⁵⁵

For this statement, the writer does not present any historical evidence. Sirāt-i Mustacīm was compiled during this period. There is no evidence in that treatise to show that he indulged in any political activity. We, therefore, cannot accept the opinion of the nationalist on

its face value.

VI

During his stay at Lucknow, Sayyid Ahmad discovered a fatwá issued by an Indian 'ālim declaring that the Hajj was no longer obligatory on the Indian Muslims, because of the perilous sea-journey to Mecca. Ḥāfeeẓ Mālik says that actually a controversy regarding the obligation of Hajj had been raging among the Muslims since the reign of Akbar. During his days, Mawlānā 'Abdullāh Sultānpūrī had declared that the obligation had elapsed due to unsafe conditions
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on the high seas.

Mawlānā Sultānpūrī had been in charge of the redistribution of lands among deserving learned religious men in the courts of Humayun and Sher Shāh. He held a high position in Akbar's court also. He was an ingenious personality. Although he held large estates around Lahore, he never paid zakāt (obligatory poor-tax). He used to hand over all property and cash which were assessable for zakāt to his wife before they had been in his possession for a full year and have them returned to him before a year had passed. "It was also known that he declared that hajj to be no longer obligatory, because one could go to Mecca only on Christian ships or through the territories of a Shī'ah
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ruler."

The reasons Sultānpūrī is reported to have had given, e.g., unsafe high seas, Christian ships, or Shi'ah territories, for making the Hajj unobligatory, are all very shallow reasons because there were many Indians who went on the Hajj before and after Sultānpūrī's time. Furthermore, Raḥmān 'Alī informs us that Mawlānā Sultānpūrī himself performed the Hajj.

The fact to note here is that the religio-moral standard of Indian Muslims was so low in those unfortunate days that they did not hesitate to use any excuse for release from this fundamental obligation of religion. And it is against this degeneration—moral, social and religious—that Sayyid Aḥmad raised his voice.

However, Mawlānā 'Abdul Ḥayy and Shāh Ismā'īl⁵⁸ denounced the fatwā outright as did Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz also. Sayyid Aḥmad at once decided to show by practical demonstration that a safe voyage to Mecca was possible. In order to encourage other Muslims to go on the Hajj, he issued a letter to his disciples extending to them an open invitation to join him on his Hajj trip along with their friends whoever wished to go. The letter reads thus:

You may bring along with you whosoever would like to accompany me. But let it be known to everyone that we have no financial assurance from any quarters. We trust in God; and leave the problems of our care to Him who will not fail us. On our way, we will seek all sorts of odd jobs to defray our expenses. Aged

men and women, who are unable to earn their living and travelling expenses, will perform the useful service of guarding the belongings of our men, while they are out on jobs; and in the expenses, both the earning persons and those sitting at home on guard duty will share equally. 59

The letter is self-explanatory and depicts the whole picture of his programme. At the end of the letter, Sayyid Ahmad strikes a note of equality, which was an important point of his teaching. Although he did not assume any financial responsibility for those travelling with him, yet the final arrangement of the journey shows that he paid for the round trip expenses of 753 persons, in spite of the fact that he had no money on the eve of the departure from Rā'ē Barēlī. Along the route from Rā'ē Barēlī to Calcutta he received thousands of rupees both in cash and kind. This is a clear indication of Sayyid Ahmad's position as a spiritual leader in the estimation of the people.

Sayyid Ahmad chose to utilize the trip from Barēlī to Calcutta for missionary activities. On his way, he stopped at Allāhābād, Baneras, Ghāzīpūr, Danāpūr, 'Azīmābād, Munghyr, Murshidābād, and many other small places.

The journey to Calcutta took over three months during which Sayyid Ahmad kept himself busy with preaching

and taking bai'at from thousands of people. But no activity of political nature is reported during that period. His missionary activities reached their climax during his three-month stay in Calcutta. He spent every moment preaching and converting people to Islām. There is no exact figure of how many thousands were enrolled in his list of disciples. We are, however, told that in Calcutta the masses flocked to him in such numbers, that he was unable even to go through the ceremony of initiation by the separate laying on of hands, but had to stretch out his turban for people to touch.⁶³ We may quote the view of another writer which comprehends the whole journey from Rā'ē Barēlī to Calcutta. He says:

In many of the towns that fell on Syed Ṣāhib's route few persons were left who did not offer bai'at and repentance at his hand. At Allāhābād, Mirzāpūr, Benares, Ghāzīpūr, 'Azīmābād and Calcutta, specially, his disciples must have run into lakhs. The limit was that at Benares the indoor patients of the Ṣadar Hospital sent him a petition begging that since they were unable to move out he might condescend to visit them in the hospital so that they could take [sic] the bai'at. About a thousand persons became his disciples every day during his two months[sic] stay at Calcutta. From morning till late at night a stream of men and women would pour in where he was staying. 64

Regular arrangements were made for circumcision; marriage ceremonies for many widowed women were performed.⁶⁵ Large number of Hindus are reported to have accepted Islām. It is stated that as a result of Sayyid Aḥmad's preaching

and a large number of people becoming his disciples, the business of the liquor shops of Calcutta came to a stand still, for which reason the proprietors lodged a complaint with the Company Government.⁶⁶ This may be an exaggeration of fact; otherwise we have to assume that only those people who became Sayyid Ahmad's disciples were consumers of alcohol, and this is hard to establish with factual data.

Besides Calcutta, people came from the Eastern Bengal and Assam to give him bay'at. One of the disciples of Sayyid Ahmad was Titūmīr or Titū Miyān of Baraset (near Calcutta), who started a reform movement in Bengal during the second phase of Sayyid Ahmad's movement.⁶⁷

Sayyid Ahmad left Calcutta sometime in 1821. The purpose of his Hajj trip has been grossly misinterpreted by a nationalist writer. He says: "Another reason, of course, was political. He knew that it would not be safe to mobilize Moslem public opinion for a war of liberation against the Sikhs and the British. An avowedly political campaign would have alarmed the British and they would have lost no time in apprehending Shahīd and his leading followers."⁶⁸

Above we have discussed why Sayyid Ahmad undertook the journey to Mecca. He wanted to prove that the sea trip was safe in order to counter the position of the fatwá. Therefore, the motive cannot have been political.

Moreover, when Sayyid Aḥmad returned from the Hajj, and actually waged war against the Sikhs, there is evidence to show that the British did not interfere in his action. It was only after his death that his followers clashed with the British government. The question of Sayyid Aḥmad's war and its relation to the British, however, falls outside the scope of this work.

With his departure for Mecca, Sayyid Aḥmad concluded the first phase of his movement— a peaceful Ṣūfī career of reform in India. But in order to eradicate completely the socio-religious corruptions of the centuries, a much longer time was needed. The available record of his movement, which we have discussed above, reveals the responsiveness of the Muslims, rich and poor, to the magnetic power of his personality and to his spiritual ability to deal with the task he had undertaken. Had he continued for a longer time in the field, the Indian Muslims would have benefited more from his efforts at reform. But the fact still remains that within that short period, the very nature of his movement produced a tremendous effect. It gave a new direction to the socio-religious life of the Indian Muslims. Thus one writer says: "As a result of his struggle, a wave of true religiousness and righteous-living swept over the Muslims, or, in other words, a gust of wind belonging to the early decades of Islām blew in breathing a new life of faith and endeavour into the dead body of the Indian part of

the Millet." Although Sayyid Aḥmad himself went out of the field of activities, the impact of his movement continued to the next generations.

Sayyid Aḥmad was a Ṣūfī reformer with extraordinary sensitivity. But between the years 1818—1821 he was never aggressive in his approach to the problem he wanted to solve; he was calm, amiable and tolerant of all. He not only dealt with the Muslims— Shī'ahs and Sunnīs— gently; he even behaved in a polished manner with the Hindus who happened to be in his circle, and he accepted their invitations smilingly. His gentle disposition and spiritual quality attracted to him Amīrs and Nawābs, such as Amīr Khān, Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah, Nawāb Aḥmad 'Alī of Rāmpūr, Shaykh Ghulām 'Alī of Allāhābād, and many others, who gave him bay'at and became his devoted disciples. He treated rich and poor equally. For example, during one of his tours, he found a community of brick-burners near Mirzāpūr who were regarded as untouchables by the local Muslim community. He and his followers had a meal with them, probably in the interest of equality in society. Equality of men is one of the features of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah.

Before we conclude this chapter, it seems necessary to discuss another point for the sake of clarification of the confusion created by some stories. Occasionally we find stories in the literature attributed to Sayyid Aḥmad and

relating to his preparations for a jihād during the period which this study investigates. For example, once in Lucknow, according to one account, Sayyid Aḥmad gave a pistol to one of his followers and said, "Keep arms with the intention of jihād in the way of God, and eat fully, if God will please, we will wage a jihād against the Kuffār(infidels). Take physical exercises, because Ṣūfīsm is not better than ⁷¹this." According to another story, one of his murīds, Shaykh Ghulām 'Alī of Allāhābād, presented him arms. Once Sayyid Aḥmad said that he should not present him arms, because he (Sayyid Aḥmad) was going on Hajj, and there was no need of arms. Ghulām 'Alī replied that he did not know whether Sayyid Aḥmad would declare jihād in this country(India) or somewhere else. Moreover, Ghulām 'Alī was not sure of his own life; and, therefore, wanted to give arms to Sayyid Aḥmad; ⁷²it was then for him to store them wherever he liked.

These statements, attributed to Sayyid Aḥmad, have been collected from books compiled long after his death. We do not have any means whereby we can varify the authenticity of these stories except to compare them with books written by his disciples during the first phase of his movement (1818—1821). None of the sources, such as Sirāt-i Mustadīm or Taqwīyat-ul-Īmān, mentions any such story. Stories provided by later writers reflect the changed situation when Sayyid Aḥmad's followers were fighting against the British.

We, therefore, conclude that the first phase of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement was a Ṣūfī-religious reform movement. It was his verbal jihād, not preparations for an armed-jihād. He, however, did wage a jihād(holy war) against the Sikhs during the second phase of his movement, which is outside the jurisdiction of this work.

CHAP. VI

TEACHINGS OF SAYYID AHMAD

We have seen in the foregoing pages that Muslim nationalist writers contend that from the beginning of his movement, Sayyid Ahmad, as a deputy of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, strove to vindicate the political cause of Indian Muslims. Even before the actual launching of the movement, he received military training in order to give leadership to the militant programme of 'Abdul 'Azīz, which aimed at liberating the country from the infidels.

But the historical facts do not seem to be in agreement with this contention of the nationalists. On the contrary, we see that during the first phase of his movement, Sayyid Ahmad did not indulge in any political activities; he was rather engaged in a peaceful religious reform struggle. In order to substantiate this fact with evidence, it appears essentially necessary to review fully the ideas and thoughts of Sayyid Ahmad, recorded in Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm, which was compiled and published during the first phase of his movement. In addition to this book, we may also consider other works that relate his teachings especially those written by Shāh Ismā'īl. We, therefore, propose to discuss in some detail

Sayyid Ahmad's ideas and teachings in this chapter.

I

The general theme of his teachings is that he exhorted the Muslims to live according to the sharī'ah, which meant to obey the commands of God and follow the Sunnah of the Prophet strictly. This had a negative side, that is, the avoidance of all that was unlawful— superstitions and innovations. But his emphasis was always on the practical aspect of religion rather than mere theoretical. W.W. Hunter says, "His idea of a reformation of religion was a purely practical one." ¹ Once he said to a group of his disciples:

Brethren! the purpose of performing the bay'ah is that you should give up everything you do which is of the nature of polytheism or heresy, your making of ta'zīyahs,² setting up banners, worshipping the tombs of pīrs and martyrs, making offerings to them and taking vows in their names. All this you should give up, and do not believe that your good and ill come from anyone except God; do not recognize anyone but Him as having the power to grant the fulfilment of your wishes. If you continue [in this way of polytheism and heresy], merely offering bay'ah will bring no benefit. ³

In the teachings of Sayyid Ahmad, the most oft-mentioned warning is to avoid polytheism(shirk) and innovations(bid'āt); and reassertion of monotheism. The classification of shirk into many categories by Shāh Ismā'īl in the

Taqwīyat-ul-Īmān(pp. 20—24) is indicative of its being diffused into Muslim life in various forms. In this treatise he says:

It is customary for many people, in the time of difficulty, to invoke the spirits of pīr, apostles, imāms, martyrs and angels, and fairies, and to beg them to fulfil their wishes. To propitiate them, vows and offerings are made in their names. Moreover, children are named after them, for instance, 'Abdun Nabī(slave of apostle), 'Alī Bakhsh(gift of 'Alī) as well as Hasan Bakhsh, Husayn Bakhsh, Madār Bakhsh, Sālār Bakhsh, and also Ghulām Muḥiy-ud-Dīn(slave of the Reviver of the Faith). And for the life protection of their children some keep a lock of hair on their heads, and others make them wear a woven thread around their necks and clothe them in the name of some saints. Some people put chains on the leg of their children, and some offer sacrifices. Many of them invoke the saints in the time of difficulty and take oaths in their names. In short, what the Hindus do towards their idols, these pseudo-Muslims do all these things with prophets, saints, imāms, martyrs, angels and fairies, and yet they claim that they themselves are Musalmāns(p. 15). 4

We can realize from this passage how far the Muslims were ignorant of the fact that they were committing gross shirk. Hundreds of names, like those mentioned above, can be found in the Muslim society of India and Pakistan even today. We have seen above that Sayyid Ahmad changed this kind of name whenever he came across it. The greater percentage of illiteracy among the Muslims, especially

among the lower class Muslims, was the primary cause of their being victims of all socio-religious abuses spread among them mainly by the heretic Ṣūfīs.

Shāh Ismā'īl has also given in Madhkīr-ul-Ikhwān a long list of customs that were being practised by the Muslim, though they were totally against the sharī'ah. Some of those customs may be mentioned here: Sacrificing a goat and firing a gun over the bed of a woman who had delivered, celebrating the sixth day after the birth of a child, taking a boy before his circumcision to a grave or to salute a banner, tying a bracelet of hair on his wrists, placing a piece of iron on his hand, making marks with indigo or lime upon doors, not celebrating marriages in the month of Dhū-al-Ja'dah, and so on.⁵

It is not necessary to quote the entire passage. We have already discussed innovations practised by Muslims in those days. Here we only want to draw attention to the fact that Sayyid Ahmad and his disciples actually witnessed these things in their society. As a matter of fact, in their daily lives the Muslims used to do many things which, because of their long established tradition, did not appear to their consciousness as repugnant to Islām or the unity of God. By pointing out those practices in detail, Shāh Ismā'īl renewed the fact that they are in violation of Islāmic ideology.

The repudiation of varieties of polytheistic associationism meant on its positive side an assertion of monotheism. 'Aziz Ahmad puts the matter into forceful language:

The stress in this reformist movement was on absolute monotheism, on the Biblical Qur'ānic conception of Jehovah who would brook no rival or associate in His omnipotence. It meant the wholesale destruction of a pantheon of confused beliefs, which had accumulated semi-divine deities from multi-religious and multi-cultural contacts, superstition, animism, demotic syncretism, Bhakti movements, Şūfī tolerance, ontological monism, poetic licence and several other sources, Indian as well as foreign, but all of them alien to fundamentalist Islām. 6

Sayyid Ahmad began his reform movement with a sincere call to return to the 'pure' Islām of the days of the Prophet. Such a return entails a wholesale rejection of all superstitions and accretions that had entered into later Muslim life. In the case of India, the vices for the most part came from contacts with Hindus. Dr. J.C. Smith observes, "The movement began, as an attack on the religious corruption, taking form of a puritanical rejection of all accretions to and all declensions from the 'pure' Islām, with a desire to return to the simplicity of faith of Prophet's Arabia."⁷

Sayyid Ahmad was a student of Shāh Walīyullāh's school of Islāmic reconstruction and reform. But the element

of purification of religion from accretions and superstitions, and a return to the positive teaching of Islām, in the teaching of Shāh Waliyullāh, became very prominent in the activist hands of Sayyid Aḥmad, the disciple of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. As we know that Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was the chief exponent of his father's school of thought; Sayyid Aḥmad being his (Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz) disciple, represented the continuation of Shāh Waliyullāh's movement's purification element. Thus one writer says:

Shāh Waliyullāh's movement of purification of Islām from 'association' is paralleled to Wahhābīsm, although it avoids its extremism by a process of sublimation which is monistic in origin, and condones such minor deviations as belief in the intercession of the Prophet, or visiting saints' tombs provided there is no danger of tomb-worship which in India he regarded to be an evil parallel to Hindu idolatry, and to have been borrowed by Muslims because of their contact with the Hindus.

This intellectual rejection of the eclectic or superstitious elements borrowed from Hinduism developed into a strong tradition of reformism in the school he [Shāh Waliyullāh] founded in Delhi and by the movement of Mujāhidīn led by Sayyid Aḥmad Barēlīvī. 8

The same writer in another place says: "He tried to save and reconstruct the essentially Islāmic element in the nineteenth century Indo-Muslim way of life into an exclusive emphasis on the Qur'ān and the sunnah; and the rejection of the peripheral, the eclectic, the syncretic and the heterodox."

In one place of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, Sayyid Aḥmad says with special stress that considering the Prophet Muḥammad as the only guide and friend for your whole character, avoid all those customs of Hind(India), Sindh, Persia and Rome that were repugnant to the Prophet and his companions. He further says that preventing the widowed women from marriage was one of the superstitions that has entered into Indian Muslim life from association with the Hindus.
¹⁰
 Try hard to remove this innovation.

Sayyid Aḥmad considered borrowing from the Hindus as the most dangerous vices in Muslim life. These included pilgrimage to Hindu holy places, Muslim participation in Hindu festivals, such as the celebrations of Diwālī, Deshara¹¹ etc., shouting Hindu religious slogans and adorning the tombs with lingams, worship of Hindū deities, borrowing from Hindu animism, consulting Brahmins for good or bad omens, excessive expenditure on marriage, and death and birth ceremonies. There were also certain external Hindu manners, such as Hindu way of greetings, eating on leaves or keeping pig-tails, piercing women's ears and noses for jewellery, shaving one's hair and eyebrows in imitation¹² of Yogis, and even dressing like Hindus.

Sayyid Aḥmad strove to eradicate these Hindu practices in Muslim life. He repudiated them unequivocally, and his teachings aimed at persuading the Muslims to do away with

these un-Islāmic(ghayr shar'ī) practices. Thus, summing up the objectives of reformers, Smith says: "The relevant point here is that the accretions which the reformers set themselves to removing from the Muslims' religion, were mostly borrowings from Hinduism, or superstitious degradations shared with Hinduism.¹³"

But the attack on Hindu borrowings should not give us the impression that Sayyid Aḥmad himself or his companions were averse to Hinduism as a religion or Hindus as a religious community. We have noted before that Sayyid Aḥmad had friendly relation with the Hindus, that he accepted their invitations and gifts, not only during the first phase of his movement, but even during the second phase when he was actually fighting against the Sikhs.¹⁴ Shāh Ismā'īl far from showing intolerance, says the following:

In fact, every religion which includes among its followers a considerable number of wise men, and especially those who have achieved esoteric depth such as Christian or Jewish mystics, Greek or neo-Platonic philosophers, Persian dualists or Hindu Yogis, has a special place for them in its sanctuary of sacredness. They are the source of its flow; but later evil ideas mingle in the stream of a religion, obscene rites predominate, commentaries become wrong and corrupt, and the mind is no longer able to grasp the reality as originally revealed to knowledge.¹⁵

This statement illustrates the attitude of Shāh Ismā'īl towards other religions. He acknowledges the spiritual

value of individuals professing faith other than his own. This liberal attitude of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement towards other religions also indicates another characteristic of his reforming endeavour. His was a Ṣūfī reform movement which was launched with the prime object of purging his own religion of superstition and un-Islāmic beliefs. Throughout Sirāt-i Mustaqīm and other books relevant to his movement, there is no evidence to show that he ever spoke of any other religions or religious groups, particularly Hindus and Hinduism, in the sense of what may be called repudiation or even criticism. His only concern was his own religion which became corrupt mostly with Hindu practices. But for that matter, he did not blame the Hindus; rather he held the Muslims— the heretic Ṣūfīs— through whose agency those Hindu practices found their way to Muslim life, responsible. Sayyid Aḥmad's lack of interest in Hindus as a religio-political community is an indication of the fact that his movement had no communal or political inclination. Dr. Smith points out that none of the (Indian) movements¹⁶ was anti Hindu. It is said that during his reforming-struggle, Sayyid Aḥmad converted many Hindus into Islām, but no case of conversion is reported to have been forceful. The Hindus were perhaps charmed by the virtues of his teaching; consequently, they accepted Islām by performing the bay'ah to him.

II

We have discussed the outline of Sayyid Aḥmad's teachings and his objectives. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn classifies his teachings or the fundamentals of his movement into: (i) Fight against corrupt practices and innovations in general; (ii) Attitude towards taqlīd and ijtihād; (iii) ¹⁷Reform of Ṣūfīsm; (iv) Political aims and objectives. It may be pointed out that Sayyid Aḥmad was not a highly learned man; and it was not possible on his part to discuss doctrinal details, nor was he interested in those matters. His was a simple and straightforward Ṣūfī system. But the important feature of his teachings was that he wished to see everything he said put into practical effect immediately. Hence one writer says: "He was unlearned in the law, preached on the practical life of the Muslims, and abstained from all doctrinal ¹⁸discussions."

We have discussed above briefly that one of the important features of the teachings of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah, the organization through which Sayyid Aḥmad tried to achieve his reform-endeavour, was the emphasis on positive morality. In one place of Ṣirāṭ-i Mustadīn, Sayyid Aḥmad says:

The most praise worthy aspect of a good conduct is to show amiability to all people and to be kind to them. The Prophet said: 'God is kind to those who are kind to their fellow-human beings; be kind to those on earth, you will be

favoured by those in the sky'. The basic idea in this Hadīth is to wish by heart the fulfilment of other persons' desire should they deserve it; and pray for the guidance of people in general— kāfir or Muslim. Try hard to render help to people by all means like giving food and clothes and such other things if it is even a small piece of date. Do not consider all people equal in character and morality, rather the gifted persons should be given special consideration; should any person possesses religious quality, he must be given particular regard in honour and other matters; and the detailed description of morality should be read in the books of Hadīth. Do not keep any open contact with those worldly people, who are proud of their wealth and position, and look down upon others; remain indifferent to them, but forget not to pray for them [for guidance] no matter whether they are good persons or sinners. 19

As we see that the tone of this moral teaching of Sayyid Ahmad is in terms of this-worldly affairs. The theme of this teaching is fellow-feeling; cooperation; humanism; equality of man in the society; well-wishing; refinement in social intercourse etc., all for the purpose of building up of a welfare society. Sayyid Ahmad did not say that for these actions the people will be rewarded in the life hereafter. Of course, that does not suggest that he did not believe in reward for good actions in the other life. For good actions God's favour is guaranteed; this favour is applicable to both lives.

This moral teaching of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah paved

the way for the liberation of the mind to understand the value of morality in this world. Commenting on the significance of Sayyid Aḥmad's moral teachings, one writer says: "His teachings seem to have been almost entirely one of practical morality. Its spirit was the religion of the daily life."²⁰

We have seen in our survey of literature that Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is the basic source of Sayyid Aḥmad's ideas. Sayyid Aḥmad, a Ṣūfī in every way, led an orthodox Ṣūfī reform movement. Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is, therefore, written in the characteristic fashion of orthodox Ṣūfīsm. But Sayyid Aḥmad denounces in unequivocal terms the heretic Ṣūfīs (Ṣūfī numā mulḥid) because they are not strict observers of the tenets of Islām. He also considers them as the chief agents through whom the Hindu practices entered into later Muslim life. In one place of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm he says:

Among the greatest obstacles in the path of God are atheistic and heretic pretenders to Ṣūfīsm who are not afraid of violating the commands of Islāmic law but habitually and characteristically do it, who teach and learn detestable, innovating, impious practices and who propagate atheism in the world. Let such persons be dealt with according to their deeds.... If it is not in your power to enforce the commands of law, look on such persons with loathing and never meet them and regard the very sight of them as an abomination. 21

In another place he says that unrespectful talks about God and His attributes are also the innovations of

heretic Ṣūfīs, who have spread them among the common people; even some respectable persons indulge in this evil. As an example, he gives, "I have bought God for one penny or 22 farthing." Pious persons should avoid hearing such talks.

The contribution of Sayyid Aḥmad towards the reformation of Ṣūfīsm consisted in his emphasis on the necessity of doing away with all innovations and superstitions that had crept into Muslim life through the agency of degenerate Ṣūfīsm. He was opposed to veneration of the murshid to the extent that it creates the conviction of his being God or Prophet. This practice of veneration of pīr entered into Muslim life through the heretic Ṣūfīs. He contends that the pīr is necessary, because God says, "Find out ways to Him" (wa-abtaghū ilayhi wasilah). But the murshid should be one who lives in conformity with the Qur'ān and the Hadīth, and who does not violate the sharī'ah in any way. His order (ḥukm) should be obeyed so long as it does not contradict the sharī'ah. But there should not be any exaggeration in showing respect to the pīr.²³

Another evil which Sayyid Aḥmad considers had penetrated into Muslim life in India through a corrupt form of Ṣūfīsm, was reverence for tombs of pious personalities. This reverence was costly in economic terms, because Indian Muslims used to undertake long journeys to visit tombs of favourite saints, and considered such visits

equivalent to pilgrimage to Mecca. They produced many innovations, such as the lighting of candles on the tombs; fasting bits of cloth to them; and presenting gifts with the view of achieving some desire. Sayyid Aḥmad repudiated these practices categorically.²⁴

Sayyid Aḥmad considers that to present gifts to the living saints in a way that involves shirk-i khafī (hidden polytheism), iṣrāf (extravagance) and creates various bad practices is one of those innovations of heretic Ṣūfīs which became extremely popular among Muslims of all levels. He says that this practice originally was not bad, but when it spread widely among the people, they began to practise it according to their own imagination; and in course of time, the practice became so corrupt that the original²⁵ beauty of it became obscure.

Although Sayyid Aḥmad's movement was analogous, rather than identical, to Arabian Wahhābīsm in displaying a more or less definite character through the organization of Tarīqah-i Muḥammadiyah²⁶ (e.g., reassertion of monotheism, equality of men, a call to return to pristine Islām, to do away with the moral and social abuses and general deterioration into which the community had been falling over the centuries of the later Middle Ages and, as a remedy, to adopt an attitude of moral and religious positivism), but unlike Wahhābīsm, Sayyid Aḥmad reformed and retained Ṣūfīsm.

In this respect, he is the direct student of Shāh Waliyullāh's²⁷ school of reformation. Sayyid Ahmad retained for his system a simple form of the institution of pīr. The doctrine on this matter is laid down in Taqwīyat-ul-Īmān as following:

The authority or influence of saints, as respecting intercessors, is that they may undoubtedly be privileged to intercede, but only when God has first granted them permission, and that the proper course is not to depend at all on their assistance, or to make any special prayers for their intercession, but to leave that, with all the other desires or necessities of man, to God alone, who, should such be requisite, will be careful both to provide an intercessor, and to give a sanction to his requests. 28

Sayyid Ahmad describes in detail all the Hindu customs adopted by the Muslims in India, such as ceremonies on the occasions of marriage; birth and death anniversaries; circumcision; preventing the widowed women from second²⁹ marriage. He urged the Muslims to give up all these un-Islāmic abuses, because they are not only un-Islāmic from the shar'ī point of view, they are also ruinous from economic point of view. Moreover, for the sake of maintaining irreligious obligation, actual religious obligations are ignored. For example, circumcision is a religious obligation, not the expensive ceremony.

Sayyid Ahmad voiced strongest words against Muslim habit of escaping arkān(fundamentals) of Islām on lame excuses. He urged the Muslims to understand the haqīqat

(significance) of zakāt, haji, prayer, fasting and jihād in the relationship between man and God; and perform the arkān strictly. ³⁰ Of course, his explanation of the significance of arkān is a traditional view. We do not find any new interpretation. Commenting on the teaching of Sayyid Aḥmad, a recent writer observes:

The effect of this aspect of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd's teaching, though perhaps we have to call it negative, was tremendous. It brought release from superstitions, idiotic or economically ruinous practices, the number of which had been increasing; it promoted a rational way of looking at the affairs of life. In the field of religious observance, it swept away the objections to the performance of pilgrimage. In social life, it initiated the struggle against the sentimental objection to widow remarriage, which had also acquired the force of law, and it was a courageous and stimulating reaffirmation of the Islāmic doctrine of equality. It began, in fact, a movement of reform whose momentum lasted for generations. The positive aspect, by contrast, very limited. Prayers were to be performed regularly, with all the devotion and humility due from a good Muslim to his God; fasting during Ramaḍān was enjoined; the pilgrimage was restored to its status of a basic duty. ³¹

The learned writer strikes an important note when he says: "He [Sayyid Aḥmad] exhorted the people to live according to the sharī'ah, which meant, as centuries earlier, ³² to obey the law strictly." In another place he says: "Prayer, fasting, zakāt and jihād in the context of a new life, which means a life with new political, social and economic

aims and obligations, would have generated a revolutionary
 33
 force."

By implication, we understand that the writer suggests that if Sayyid Aḥmad would have explained and interpreted the significance of the positive aspects of his teachings, though they are very limited, in the light of a new life in the early nineteenth century under changed circumstances, they would have generated a revolutionary force. This is very true. Sayyid Aḥmad preached the sharī'ah and asked the Muslims to follow it strictly, but he did not take into consideration nor did he explain to his audience whether or not the twelve-hundred-year old Muslim sharī'ah could be followed meaningfully by the Muslims of the early nineteenth century, without adjusting it by interpretation or reinterpretation to the new circumstances. For example, the purpose of zakāt in Islām is primarily to maintain an economically balanced and prosperous society. Two and half percent zakāt perhaps was sufficient to help the poor section of the Muslim society twelve hundred years back, in consideration of the cost of subsistence. But is the same amount sufficient for the same purpose after twelve hundred years when everything has changed? Similarly, all articles of Muslim sharī'ah should be interpreted and explained in order to find out ways and means for their meaningful application; otherwise, the sharī'ah cannot be regarded a living source of guidance for the Muslim community. So long as

the Muslim reformers and thinkers cannot fulfil the tremendous task of making the sharī'ah a living sharī'ah by making necessary adjustments here and there to suit life in a new situation, their efforts to reform their religion will always remain only partially successful.

It was not possible for Sayyid Aḥmad to perform the tremendous task to which we have just referred for various reasons. We have already mentioned the limitations of Sayyid Aḥmad from the educational point of view. Moreover, he carried on partly Shāh Walīyullāh's type of Islāmic reform, which was overladen with an orthodox Ṣūfīstic trend. The basic ideal of such movement is incompatible with the idea of any change or adjustment in the traditional structure of religion. We are not surprised to find some observations of Professor Mujeeb about Shāh Walīyullāh on this point. He writes:

Shāh Walīullāh was a gifted thinker and writer. But it would not be unfair to say that in his attitude towards sharī'ah he was anxious above all to maintain and intensify the desire for conformity. The whole force of his argument is used to prove the practical wisdom and the spiritual necessity of believing and practising what had been enjoined in the sharī'ah and was, therefore, obligatory... He widened, to some extent, the intellectual horizon of the orthodox, but there can be no doubt that he idealized the sharī'ah in the form in which he found it, without attempting a definition of 'amal-i-sāliḥ', the duties and the social virtues that would help the Indian Muslims to fulfil

their moral and spiritual function when Muslim states were rapidly declining. 34

In another place Mujeeb says: "There is no evidence to show that Shāh Walīullāh aimed at a reinterpretation of the sources of religion in order to adapt law and practice to existing circumstances. He did not even attempt a change in emphasis." 35

This was Shāh Walīyullāh's attitude towards sharī'ah. His main contribution towards the rethinking of Islām was his realization that something had gone and was going wrong in the structure of Islām. This consciousness is significant and may be called the only modern element in his whole thinking; for as a Sūfī-ʿālim he had an orthodox outlook which was reflected in his movement.

Sayyid Aḥmad was a student of Shāh Walīyullāh's school of thought; the same orthodox element persisted in his reform-struggle. It was perhaps this orthodox attitude of the leaders of pre-modern movements in India that their movements could not produce expected result. We may accept Professor Mujeeb's observation on this point. He says:

With leaders such as the Walīullāh family in Delhi, Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd (1786—1831) in the U.P. and Mawlānā Sharīʿatullāh in Bengal, the religious revival became intense and widespread. It is because of the personalities of the leaders and potentialities of the movement that it can be said that the

Indian Muslims might have had another destiny if orthodoxy had given a different quality and direction to its guidance. 36

But the fact cannot be denied that Sayyid Aḥmad's movement, and other movements mentioned above, had the immediate effect of jolting the Muslims from their slumber, though the movements could not thoroughly eradicate the older socio-religious abuses. And Sayyid Aḥmad and other leaders are credited with having set in motion a fresh turn towards reformation of Muslim socio-religious life. It was this tendency which prepared the ground upon which the modern reformers worked for an orientation of Muslim life.

III

We have said at the beginning that Sayyid Aḥmad has discussed the two most important mystical concepts, viz., Rāh-i Wilāyat and Rāh-i Nabuwat for which he uses two relative phrases, namely, Hubb-i 'Ishqī and Hubb-i Īmānī respectively.

He begins the discussion on these two turūq(ways) with a note of warning that the earlier mystics did not take trouble to explain the intricate point relating to the differentiation between these two 'ways', or Hubbs.

He says that the basis and objective of the first Hubb was not to achieve the 'Beloved'(God); and separation was its condition while that of the second Hubb was to acquire the knowledge of the 'Beloved's benefits(manāfi' awr fawā'id) and excellences(kamālāt) and to understand lover's own need to the 'Beloved'. This objective becomes clear at the union(waṣāl), because the knowledge of certainty turns into vision of certainty('ilm al-yaqīn 'ayn al-yaqīn se
³⁷
badal jātā ha')

Sayyid Ahmad discusses at great length the 'results', 'fruits', 'states', 'stages', and 'supports' of Tarīq-i Wilāyat and Tarīq-i Nabuwat. He says that the two ṭurūq were not mutually exclusive, that is, do not think that the traveller in Rāh-i Wilāyat could never be successful on the 'stages' of Rāh-i Nabuwat, or the seeker of Rāh-i Nabuwat could not reach the 'states' of Wilāyat, or the people of Hubb-i 'Ishqī were devoid of Hubb-i Īmānī, and the people of Hubb-i Īmānī remained ignorant about
³⁸
the 'states' of 'Ishqīyah. As an example, he cites the disappointment and restlessness that the Prophet experienced during periods of cessation of revelation in contrast to
³⁹
periods when revelations were forthcoming.

Sayyid Ahmad further says that for travelling in Rāh-i Wilāyat and Nabuwat, Hubb-i Īmānī should be regarded as the guide, and Hubb-i 'Ishqī as a bush(jangal) or one

of the elhouses of Tarīq-i Nabuwat. Therefore, Hubb-i Īmānī is the patch(paywand) of the life of the traveller of Tarīq-i Rahmānī(Tarīq-i Nabuwat); and Hubb-i 'Ishqī is related to ⁴⁰ 'states'(hālāt) and experiences(waridāt).

In short, Sayyid Aḥmad considers that for the beginning of the travel, Hubb-i Īmānī should be considered as the foundation, rather as wood, cement and stones which are the roots(maddah) of structure('imārat); and Hubb-i 'Ishqī and its 'fruits' should be regarded like those quick-declining(sarī' al-zawāl) beautiful colours and heart-pleasing sketches(naqshūn) which come into existence after ⁴¹ the structure.

The above exposition of Rāh-i Nabuwat and Rāh-i Wilāyat by Sayyid Aḥmad shows that he tried to establish the superiority of the former with its distinctive feature, Hubb-i Īmānī, over the latter with its distinctive feature, Hubb-i 'Ishqī. In doing so, he seems to be standing in the tradition of a famous Ṣūfī of India, namely, Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī. By an exposition of prophecy(Nabuwat) and sainthood(Wilāyat), Sirhindī came to the conclusion that ⁴² the former was superior to the latter.

Finally, Sayyid Aḥmad describes that one of the signs of Hubb-i 'Ishqī was "neglect of knowledges and external acts of worship"; while the other sign was "not

understanding of the relationship between the external and hidden aspects of the sharī'ah.⁴³ In contrast to this relation of Hubb-i 'Ishqī to the sharī'ah, he describes, "one of the excellent supports of Hubb-i 'Imānī as the adoption of a strong determination to following the sharī'ah" while the "other big supporting acts of Hubb-i 'Imānī are to implement the sharī'ah, revive the Sunnah and eradicate⁴⁴ the innovations or to propagate one of the true turūq."

In passing, it may be mentioned that although Sirāt-i Mustaqīm does not deal with the subtle metaphysical speculations of Ṣūfīsm, we should not gain the impression that Sayyid Ahmad and his disciples completely ignored these matters. As evidence for their interest in important matters, we have 'Abqāt of Shāh Ismā'īl, one of the most comprehensive works on 'ilm taṣawwuf. One of the burning questions of taṣawwuf in those days was the conflict between the exponents of Wahdat al-Wajūd (ontological monism) and Wahdat al-Shuhūd (phenomenological monism).⁴⁵

On this matter Dr. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn says:

Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd, however, was not much concerned with the theoretical niceties— his object was to rouse the Muslims of the sub continent, to unite them, to purify their beliefs and to prepare them for jihād. He, therefore, dismisses the question in a few words. It is declared in the Sirāt-ul-Mustaqīm that the point is one which it is worse than useless to be constantly discussing, all that is to be remembered is what has

already been said about it by illustrious authorities of Sūfism: that created things are not to be considered as actually the same as God, though they have their stability and permanence in Him, and are the media in which He has chosen to manifest His attributes. Thus on this fundamental issue Sayyid Ahmad practically accepted the teachings of Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sānī in preference to those of Muḥiy-ud-dīn Ibn-i-'Arabī. ⁴⁶

Another important issue Sayyid Ahmad has discussed in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is Shī'ism. The Shī'ah-Sunnī question had been raging the Muslim minds in India even on an intellectual level for a long time. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī refuted the Shī'ah doctrines in his first literary endeavour, Epistle on the Refutation of the Shī'ah, which was written in the pre-Ṣūfī period of his life. In this work, he denounced the Shī'ahs and their role in Islāmic religious history and declared that the Shī'ahs must be considered infidels. Although in his later life, Sirhindī showed in his maktubāt a mild attitude to the Shī'ahs, still he viewed them as misguided and asked Mughal officials not to maintain any relationship with the Shī'ahs. ⁴⁷ Shāh Walīyullāh is reported ⁴⁸ to have had adopted a tolerant view of them. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz discussed the question whether Shī'ahs were kāfirs, ⁴⁹ apostates or just immoral.

Sayyid Ahmad, in his turn, seems to have adopted an uncompromising attitude to the Shī'ahs. He declared openly that the Shī'ah practice of forming Muharram procession

accompanied with lamentations as a means of showing veneration to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, construction of ta'zīyahs, and hoisting of banners, are all parts of the customs of the Rāfiḍiyyun (one of the many branches of the Shī'ah) and is equal to idol worship.⁵⁰ He considered the destruction of ta'zīyahs and the model tombs to be as pious as the breaking of idols.⁵¹ He further says that if destruction cannot be achieved by the hand, then words should be used; and if even that is not possible, then the practice should be regarded as evil in the heart; and that is the lowest category of faith.⁵² However, he prefers the destruction of ta'zīyahs by force. He also considers that to give preference to 'Alī over Abū Bakr and 'Umar as one of the practices of the Rāfiḍiyyun.⁵³

But in contrast to Sayyid Aḥmad's ideas and views relating to taṣawwuf, he had very little to say about shar'ī matters. His idea of sharī'ah, as we have seen, was very simple— worship God alone, and God direct, without the interposition of humanly devised forms and ceremonies; follow the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. He was neither able nor interested in the details of sharī'ah. Whenever he mentions sharī'ah in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, he mentions it in connection with his Ṣūfī thought by discussing its external (zāhirī) and internal (bāṭinī) aspects and its relationship with other Ṣūfī concepts such as Hubb-i 'Ishqī and Hubb-i Imānī.⁵⁴ He is completely silent about the importance of fiqh in

shar'ī matters. We have seen before that in his idea of 'ilm, he has discarded the importance of books of fiqh (Muslim jurisprudence). Throughout Sirāt-i Mustadīm there is no instance to show that he had ever spoken on any legal points. The Muslim jurists did not receive any attention in Sayyid Ahmad's ideas and teachings. On the contrary, in one place he says that it is better to follow all the four schools of jurisprudence in our actions, but the knowledge and teachings of the Prophet should not be considered confined to the knowledge of any one individual. The Prophet's knowledge was diffused all over the world. "In dealing with any particular problem", says Sayyid Ahmad, "if an authentic Hadīth of the Prophet is available, no mujtahid's decision should be followed in solving that problem, and considering the Ahl-al-Hadīth (followers of Hadith) your Imāms, love them by heart, and make their honour⁵⁵ a point of your responsibility."

What is explicit in this statement of Sayyid Ahmad is that he rejected all authority of the four orthodox schools of Muslim jurisprudence, which meant, positively, that he declared himself a ghayr muqallid (non-conformist). Rejection of taqlīd means in its positive aspect acceptance of ijtihād to which Sayyid Ahmad has made reference in the above statement. We have discussed before that the insistence on the right of ijtihād and condemnation of taqlīd is one of the important features of Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah, through

which Sayyid Aḥmad (and other pre-modern Muslim reformers) tried to achieve Muslim reform. This feature had far-reaching consequences; it acted as a great liberating power for Muslim minds, which helped subsequent Islāmic developments.

But Sayyid Aḥmad's pleading for a consideration of Ahl al-Hadīth as Imāms, produced a grave consequence in the long run. One group among his disciples took this point seriously and eventually formed a sub-section of Muslims and became known as the Ahl-i Hadīth group among the Indian Muslims. Although the Ahl-i Hadīth constituted almost a complete break with the medieval past and sought⁵⁶ to restore the pristine Islām of the earlier centuries, subsequently they indulged in hairsplitting matters,⁵⁷ such as raf'-'iyadayn and āmīn bi al-jih in prayers. Even a man like Shāh Ismā'īl took trouble to write books on these matters (cf. infra, n. 3, p. 167.)

Thus, instead of effecting a unity among the Muslims, for which Sayyid Aḥmad struggled, his followers, the Ahl-i Hadīth, created a dangerous division within the Indian Muslim community. During the later part of the last century, when the Mujāhidin were being persecuted by the British, through the mechanism of the Ahl-i Hadīth, many innocent Muslims are said to have been implicated in the State⁵⁸ Trial of 1864—1871.

We have discussed the content of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm

in the first chapter of this work in connection with the survey of literature. The chapterwise discussion of the subject-matter of this treatise has revealed to us that it contains nothing more than Ṣūfīstic concepts of Sayyid Aḥmad and his reform ideas. There is no reference to the political condition of India except in one place which Sayyid Aḥmad seems to have made just in passing.

In this chapter we have discussed the teachings of Sayyid Aḥmad in some detail. The important point to note here is that throughout Sirāt-i Mustaqīm we do not find any evidence to support the nationalists' contention that from the beginning of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad tried to vindicate the political cause of Muslim India. They mention his name in reference to Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and his fatwā which declared India under non-Muslim control as Dār-ul-Harb. But there is no mention of Sayyid Aḥmad in the works of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, especially in the collection of his fatwā.

We have also surveyed those works of Shāh Ismā'īl which are relevant to the reform movement of Sayyid Aḥmad. In none of these works is there any reference to political ideas of Sayyid Aḥmad.

The absence of any evidence in the contemporary works, particularly in Sayyid Aḥmad's own sayings, about

his political activities during the first phase of his movement, suggests that the nationalists' contention is a later development, which reflects the changed circumstances.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the life of Sayyid Ahmad up to the end of the first phase of his movement (1821), we find that he was born and brought up in a Ṣūfī family. Afterwards, he received some education in Delhi. During his stay in Delhi, he made tremendous progress in the way of the mystics and ultimately became a murīd of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. His pīr, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, certified that he had been granted both Wilāyat-i Anbiyā' and Wilāyat-i Awliyā'. Sayyid Ahmad worked for seven years under Amīr Khān Pindarī of Rajputana. His service under Amīr Khān was conditioned by the economic pressure on his family. His association with Amīr Khān, however, was helpful for the furtherance of his spiritual quality.

Sayyid Ahmad grew up as a sensitive Ṣūfī; he seems to have been moved at the state of Muslim religious-social condition in early nineteenth-century India. He, therefore, launched a reform movement in 1818. This movement can be called a verbal jihād against religious corruptions, social abuses and moral degradation among the Muslims. The organization or teaching through which Sayyid Ahmad tried to achieve the reform is called Tarīqah-i Muhammadiyah,

which is also called neo-Şūfism or reformed Şūfism. The two characteristic features of this neo-Şūfism, namely, moral activism and rejection of medieval authorities and insistence on independent reasoning, produced far-reaching consequences. They liberated Muslim minds from medieval captivity, and then directly contributed to the intellectual regeneration of modern Islām.

When Sayyid Aḥmad undertook a series of tours to preach his ideas and teachings, he urged the Muslims to do away with all innovations and corruptions which they had been practising. In positive terms, he asked them to worship only one God; to follow the teachings of Islām and to implement the Sunnah strictly. Thousands of Muslims responded to his call and accepted him as a spiritual guide.

He effected some important social and religious reforms. His moral force and religious quality were attractive to the Muslims. Although the reform-period of Sayyid Aḥmad was short(1818—1821), during which he could not eradicate vices from Muslim life fully, or his reform movement could not transform the Muslim society completely, still the fact remains that his reform endeavour had far-reaching impact on Muslim socio-religious life.

Sayyid Aḥmad was primarily a Şūfī. His ideas, as we find them in Sirāt-i Mustadīm are orthodox Şūfī ideas.

In Ṣūfī practices, he was completely different from medieval typical Ṣūfīs. To express his ideas, he uses Ṣūfī phraseologies and terminologies. Whenever he talks about sharī'ah, he talks about it in reference to Ṣūfī concepts, such as "the fruit of sharī'ah and tarīqat and basis of haqīqat and ma'rifat are to achieve love of God." Nowhere in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm does he speak of sharī'ah separate from Ṣūfī concepts. But he is not interested in shar'ī complications relating to legal matters.

Therefore, on the basis of evidence in the Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, Sayyid Aḥmad should be regarded primarily as an orthodox Ṣūfī, who formulated his ideas on the basis of the Qur'ān and the Hadīth; and the movement he launched was a Ṣūfī reform movement with puritanical tendencies.

We have emphasized in the previous chapter that neither in Sirāt-i Mustaqīm nor in any other works relating to the ideas and thoughts of Sayyid Aḥmad is there any evidence to show that during the first phase of his movement, Sayyid Aḥmad indulged in any political activities or communal thinking. He was solely engaged in his struggle to achieve Muslim reform. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz was his spiritual guide, not political adviser. Even in his religious reform-efforts, he was independent of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. In short, the first phase of his movement was an indigenous peaceful

Ṣūfī-religious reform-struggle without being affected by any political influence, either local or foreign.

However, beginning with the late nineteenth century, Sayyid Aḥmad's movement began to receive a different treatment. First of all the writers began to treat the two phases of his movement together without any regard for the different nature of the two phases. In the British literature his movement is treated as a "Wahhābī" movement, for which there is no historical ground.

In the wake of nationalism in the Indian sub-continent, Sayyid Aḥmad's movement received special attention from scholars of India and afterwards from those of Pakistan. These nationalist writers treat the two phases of the movement as one with one single thesis— that he was anti-British and anti-Sikh and that his whole endeavours were directed to one single objective— to wage a jihād against the infidels in order to liberate the country. Again, his endeavour, as the nationalist writers think, was not independent; rather he was a deputy of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, who constituted a "Central Revolutionary Committee" to wage jihād with the view of liberating the country, which had become Dār-ul-Harb according to his own fatwā. In order to materialise his militant programme, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz sent Sayyid Aḥmad to Rajputana for acquiring military training, and then he was sent out to enroll fighters.

And finally, Sayyid Aḥmad's movement is considered as the precursor of all later Muslim movements in India including the one which led to the creation of Pakistan.

We have examined all available information about this movement with historical facts and found that during the first phase of his movement, neither Sayyid Aḥmad nor his pīr, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, had shown any anti-British or anti-Sikh feeling which could be construed as evidence for their desire to wage a jihād (in the sense of fighting with arms). At this stage Sayyid Aḥmad did not show any political inclination either in theory or in practice. It, then, seems that the crux of the problem is in the thinking of nationalist writers who understand the word jihād only in its technical sense, which means qitāl, that is, to fight with arms (the literal meaning of jihād is to strive; to struggle). They give no consideration to its several meanings, while Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz gave different meanings to jihād with a preference for verbal jihād. And Sayyid Aḥmad, his faithful disciple, only carried out the verbal jihād during the first phase of his movement.

The attention and interpretation of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement by the nationalist writers is a recent development. In the early nineteenth century (1818—1821) to the Muslims of India to whom Sayyid Aḥmad preached his ideas and thoughts, he was only a Ṣūfī— a simple Ṣūfī preacher and reformer.

NOTES

CHAP. I

- 1 For his life see Mirzā Hayrat Dihlawī, Hayāt-i Tayyibah, Lahore, n.d. pp. 26 et seq.; Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Āthār-us-Sanādīd, Delhi, 1965, pp. 548—554; ‘Abdur Raḥmān Kilānī, in the Introduction to Taawīyat-ul-Īmān, Lahore, 1956, pp. 4—10.
- 2 M.A. Bārī, "A Nineteenth Century Muslim Reform Movement in India", in G. Maqdisi(ed.), Arabic and Islāmic Studies in Honour of Hamilton A.R. Gibb, Cambridge, Mass., p. 90, as referred to JRAS, XIII, 315.
- 3 The following books have been written by Mawlānā Muḥammad Ismā‘īl:-
 - (i) Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm(Persian);
 - (ii) ‘Idāh al-Haqq al-Ṣarīḥ fī Ahkām al-Mayyit wa- al-Ḍarīḥ(Persian);
 - (iii) Manṣab-i Imāmat(Persian);
 - (iv) Risālah fī Mabḥath ‘Imkān al-Nazīr wa-‘Adam al-Nazīr (Persian);
 - (v) Tanqīd al-Jawāz fī Jawāz Raf‘i al-Yadayn fī al-Ṣalāh(Persian);
 - (vi) Tanwīr al-‘Aynayn fī ‘Ithbāt-i Raf‘i al-Yadayn(Arabic);
 - (vii) Risālah Uṣūl-i Fiqh(Persian);
 - (viii) ‘Abqāt(Urdū, some discussions on taṣawwuf and ‘ilm-i kalām);

(ix) Mathnawī Silk-i Nūr Dar Madh Huḍūr Akram...(Persian);

(x) Raddul-Ishrāk(Arabic), in two chapters; the first chapter had been translated into Urdū by the author and titled:

(xi) Taqwīyat-ul-Īmān; the second part of the first chapter is called Tadhkīr-ul-Ikhwān, also translated into Urdū.

- 4 The book originally was compiled in Persian, and was first published in Calcutta in 1823; later it was translated into Urdū. The first and fourth chapters were written by Shāh Ismā‘īl and second and third chapters by Mawlānā ‘Abdul Ḥayy. The original edition is no longer available. It was also translated into Arabic by Mawlānā ‘Abdul Ḥayy during the stay of Sayyid Aḥmad and his followers in Mecca(1237—1238/1822—1823), and it is said to have been widely circulated among the ‘Ulamā’ there. An English synopsis of Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is given by J.R.C. in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal(JASB) I,(1832), 479—498.

- 5 Consult The Indian Musalmans: Are they bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen? Calcutta, 1945, p. 45.

Hunter's remark is significant. He wants to draw the attention of the readers to the fact that the Qur’ān is the foundation on which Islām stands. The Muslims turn their attention to the Qur’ān for all

guidance and inspiration. To say that Sirāt-i Mustaqīm is the "Qur'ān" of the movement is to say that this is the fountain-head of the movement whence comes guidance and all inspirations.

6 Cf. Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, Lahore, n.d. pp. 16—17.

7 Cf. Yohanan, Friedman, "Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī" (a Ph.D. thesis), pp. 51—52.

8 p. 18.

9 Ibid., pp. 19—26. Hubb means Love, affection, friendship. Hubb-i Īmānī, therefore, means 'love of God expressed through strengthening faith in Him and obeying His commands', and Hubb-i 'Ishqī means 'striving in the way of God through absorption in love'.

Shāh Ismā'īl explains that Hubb-i 'Ishqī belongs to the (mystic) experiences pertaining to the first stage of the mystic path, while Hubb-i Īmānī belongs to the excellences of the prophets and the stages of the saints. Most of the lay mystics, by putting the former in place of the latter and hence taking it as the purport of the shar'ī indications, try in vain to adjust the experiences of the prophets and saints with those of the people exercising ardent love and ecstasy, whereas the experiences of these saints and prophets have nothing to do with the experiences of the beginners (lay travellers).

10 Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, pp. 24—25.

- 11 Ibid., p. 59.
- 12 Ibid., p. 64.
- 13 See J.C. Archer, Mystical elements in Muhammad, New Haven,
Yale University Press, 1924, 86 p.
- 14 Cf. Mawj-i Kawthar, Lahore, n.d. p. 12.
- 15 Cf. Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm, p. 109.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 238—325.
- 17 See L. Massignon, "Tarīqa" in Encyclopaedia of Islām,
IV(1934), 667—672.
- 18 Cf. Ṣirāt-i Mustaqīm, pp. 325—367.
- 19 Ibid., p. 368.
- 20 Ibid., pp. 369—370.
- 21 Ibid., p. 370.
- 22 J.R.C., "Notice of the Peculiar Tenets held by the
followers of Sayed Aḥmad, taken chiefly from the Ṣirāt-ul-
Mustaqīm, a Principal Treatise of the Sect, written
by Maulvī Maḥmūd Ismā'īl", Journal of the Asiatic
Society of Bengal, I(1832), 480.
- 23 Ibid., 480—481.
- 24 Muḥammad, Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, Montreal, 1967,
p. 445.
- 25 Taawīyat-ul-Īmān is the Urdū translation, rendered by
the author, of the first chapter of an Arabic text,
viz., Radd-ul-Ishrāk. Its first date of publication
is not known. Mir Hashmat 'Alī has rendered an English
translation, entitled "Support of the Faith", first
published in 1852.

- 26 See Tadwīyat-ul-Īmān, Lahore, 1956, pp. 20—24.
- 27 Ibid., p. 15; Hashmat 'Alī, "Support of the Faith",
pp. 1—2.
- 28 It has been translated into Urdū(1257/1841) from Arabic by one of Shāh Ismā'īl's friends, namely, Mawlawī Muḥammad Sultān, after the death of Shāh Ismā'īl, and published separately.
- 29 The State of Tonk in Rajputana(the present province of Rajasthan in the North-West Region of Indian Union) was created by the East India Company's rule after a peace treaty signed in 1817 with Amīr Khān, father of Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah. The Memoirs of Amīr Khān, by Busawan Lal in Persian is an important book on his life, but it is not available today.

For a brief life sketch of Nawāb Wazīr-ud-Dawlah, see Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, Jamā'at-i Mujāhidīn, Lahore, 1955, pp. 189—192. Mihr writes that Wazīr-ud-Dawlah was a learned man. His Wasāyā al-Wazīr 'Alā Tarīq al-Bashīr wa al-Nadhīr(Tonk, 1284 A.H.), is a specimen of his learning. In this book much valuable information about Sayyid Aḥmad and some of his close associates is recorded. But sometimes excessive enthusiasm overshadowed the facts; for example, in one place he writes that when peace talks between his father, Nawāb Amīr Khān, and the English were being negotiated, Sayyid Ṣāhib prophecised that such and such areas would be

given to the Nawāb. In fact, he received those areas from the English(cf. p. 191). During Sayyid Ahmad's service with Amīr Khān(1810—1817, of which we shall discuss later) both father and son became his disciples.

30 Punjab University Library MS.

31 The information about these three books has been gathered from Ghulām Rasūl Mihr's Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd, Lahore, 1954, pp. 13—14.

32 Mihr, Jamā'at-i Mūjāhidīn, p. 102, L.2nd from the top.

33 Ibid., pp. 103, 104.

34 He joined the movement at a time when it assumed an anti-British character. He was one of those who stood in dock of the State Trials of Ambala in 1864. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but he was released later. For a detailed life history, in his own words, beginning from the Ambala Trial to his return to his home at Thānēsar, see his book, Kalāpānī(Dāstān-i 'Ajīb), Delhi, 1964.

35 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 22. For Thānēsari's opinion see Tawārīkh 'Ajībah mawsūm bih Sawānīh Ahmadī, Delhi, 1309/1891, pp. 19, 178.

36 Ibid., p. 5.

37 Ibid., pp. 5—6. The meaning of ummī is being interpreted differently by modern scholarship as compared with the Muslim traditional view. Muslim tradition views the ummī in the Qur'ān in the sense of illiterate,

while modern scholarship interprets it in the sense of jihālat(ignorance), i.e., the Prophet was a Jāhilī Arab and not an illiterate.

38 Ibid., p. 9.

39 Ibid., p. 26.

40 The author of the book Mas'ud 'Ālam Nadwī. Although the title of the book does not suggest anything about either Sayyid Aḥmad or nationalism in India, the content of the book does so. Nadwī begins his book with a defence of Sayyid Aḥmad against the Wahhābī accusation and ends with the State Trial of Ambala. The author's emphasis is on the political aspect, and so much so that it simply obscures the religious aspect of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement. Nadwī maintains that the movement was both anti-British and anti-Sikh. His naming of Sayyid Aḥmad's movement as the 'first Islāmic movement of India' is an indication of his contention that he regards Sayyid Aḥmad as the first Indian Muslim who fought for the liberation of his country from the yoke of non-Muslims. The title of the book also indicates that the author does not consider the movements of Shāh Waliyullāh and Sirhindī had the same objective like Sayyid Aḥmad's.

41 The first volume of A History of the Freedom Movement was published in 1957, and so far four volumes have been published. In the first volume, Dr. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn

has written two lengthy articles on Sayyid Ahmad's life and movement(cf. chaps. XIX & XX, 556—580 and 581—600).

- 42 For the life and activities of 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī see trans. E.R. Smith, My Life, "A Translation of the Autobiography of 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī", (From the speeches of 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī, ed. Muḥammad Sarwar, Delhi National Islāmic University, Lahore, n.d. pp. 57—74. I.I.S. VF. 1953); Akbar Ābādī, Mawlānā 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī awr un ke Macīd, Lahore, 1946.
- 43 Cf. 'Ubaydullāh Sindhī, Shāh Walīyullāh awr unki Siyāsī Tahrik(hereinafter referred to as Shāh Walīyullāh), Lahore, 1952, p. 81.
- 44 Cf. Hāfeeẓ Mālik, Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan (hereinafter referred to as Moslem Nationalism), Washington , D.C., 1963, pp. 154 ff.
- 45 "A Nineteenth Century Muslim Reform Movement in India", p. 89, as referred to Sachin Sen, The Birth of Pakistan, Calcutta, 1955, p. 32. Bārī further writes that similar views are expressed by A.H. Muḥiyuddīn in a paper entitled, "Is Pakistan a Consequence of Jahhābīsū?" read at the 1954 session of the Pakistan History Conference(see n. 1, p. 89).
- 46 Indian Musalmans, Lahore, 1964(reprinted from the first edition, London, 1871), pp. 3—4.
- 47 T.P. Hughes, Notes on Muhammadanism being outlines of Religious System of Islām, 2d ed.; London, 1877, p. 222.

NOTES

CHAP. II

- 1 Cf. Muḥammad Ismā'īl, Sirāt-i Muṣṭacīm, Lahore, n.d.
pp. 220—21.
- 2 W.C. Smith, "The 'Ulamā' in Indian Politics", in
Politics and Society in India, ed. C.H. Philips,
London, 1963, p. 47.
- 3 T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islām: A History of the
Propagation of the Muslim Faith, London, 1913, pp. 279—80,
quoting W.W. Hunter, "The Religions of India", The Times
(London), February 25, 1888; also see Enamul Haq,
"The Sūfī Movement in Bengal", Indo-Iranica, III,
No. 1 (1948—49), 9—32.
- 4 Cf. Muḥammad Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, Montreal,
1967, pp. 10, 30.

For the Sūfī movements and the relation of different
Sūfī Orders to temporal authorities in the thirteenth
century, see K.A. Nizāmī, Some Aspects of Religion and
Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century,
'Alīgarh, 1961; Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, chaps. vi & vii, pp.
113—167, esp. p. 137; Yūsuf Ḥusayn Khān, "Sūfism in
India", Islāmic Culture, Ḥaydarābād (Dn.), XXX (1956),

239—262; K.A. Nizāmī, "Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and their attitude towards the state", Islāmic Culture, XXII(1948), 387—399; XXIII(1949), 13—21, 162—170, 312—321; XXIV(1950), 60—71; T.W. Arnold, Spread Of Islām, pp. 254—293; Muḥammad Salīm, "The attitude of the Chishtī saints towards political power", Proc. Pakistan History Conference, comp. Sayyid Muʿīnūl Haqq, Karachi, 1952, pp. 225—229.

- 5 Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 161.
- 6 Ibid., p. 162.
- 7 Mujeeb mentions six 'orthodox' Ṣūfī orders adding Firdawsīyah and Shattariyah to the four orders mentioned above. He mentions the Qalandars and the Madārīs among the 'unorthodox' orders(cf. Indian Muslims, p. 283, and n. 1 for the list of fourteen orders; also see Massignon, "Ṭarīqa", Encyclopaedia of Islām, IV, London, 1934, 667—672.
- 8 Professor Mujeeb defines orthodox Ṣūfīsm thus: "Orthodox Ṣūfīsm, that is, the Ṣūfīs who formulated their views [sic] , insisted on conformity with sharīʿah"(Indian Muslims, p. 164). Mujeeb also makes a differentiation between orthodox Ṣūfīsm and orthodox 'ulamā'. Both groups insist on conformity with the sharīʿah. But "the sharīʿah was from the beginning regarded by the Ṣūfīs as having an external form and an inner reality"; and this inner reality Ṣūfīsm attempts to realize(see

ibid., p. 246). While Sūfism puts emphasis on the following of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, without much concern with fiqh or the opinions of Muslim jurists, orthodox 'ulamā' scrupulously follow the letters of fiqh. Mujeeb says: "We must reiterate that what is meant by orthodoxy is the particular interpretation of Islāmic doctrine and its application to various problems and situations of life which appears in the works of fiqh recognized by the 'ulamā' in India" (ibid., pp. 247—248).

- 9 The Religious Quest of India: Indian Islām, London, 1930, p. 125, also see p. 126. For the Bi-Shara' branches of the Suhrawardīyah order see J.A. Subhan, Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines, Lucknow, 1938, pp. 247—52.
- 10 Cf. pp. 112—113.
- 11 Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 284.
- 12 S.M. Ikrām, History of Muslim Civilization in India and Pakistan, Lahore, 1961, p. 458.
- 13 S.R. Sharma, The Religious Policy of the Great Mughuls, p. 106, cited by Ikrām, op. cit., p. 459.
- 14 J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, New York, 1915, p. 16. For more information on Brahmo Samāj see P.C. Mazoomdar, The Faith and Progress of the Brahmo Samāj, Calcutta, 1882.
- 15 K. Ingham, Reformers in India, Cambridge, 1956, p. 16.
- 16 Titus, Indian Islām, p. 178.

- 17 Cf. Hujeeb, Indian Muslims, pp. 10—11.
- 18 Ibid., p. 14.
- 19 See ibid., p. 18.
- 20 Quoted in ibid., p. 19.
- 21 Studies in Islāmic Culture in the Indian Environment
Studies in
 (hereinafter referred to as Islāmic Culture), Oxford,
 1964, p. 161.
- 22 Autobiography of Lutfullāh, 3d ed.; London, 1858, p. 41.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 43—44.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 53—54.

CHAP. III

- 1 Rā'ē Barēlī is about 80 miles east of Lucknow. Mihr and Qureshī say forty-nine miles. There is another city known as Barēlī or Bāns Barēlī which is about a hundred miles west of Lucknow. Very often writers confuse Barēlī with Rā'ē Barēlī (cf. S.M. Ikrām, Mawj-i Kawthar, Lahore, n.d. p. 52; Raḥmān 'Alī, Tadhkirah-i 'Ulamā'-i Hind (Persian), Urdū trans. Ayyub Qādrī, Karachi, 1961, p. 98). The word Barēlī is also spelt differently, e.g., Rāi Berelly, Bareilly, and Bareilly. But the correct spelling according to the transliteration system of the Institute of Islāmic Studies, McGill University, is Rā'ē Barēlī, which has been accepted for this work.

- 2 Controversy arose as to the exact date of his birth. Ghulām Rasūl Mihr says that he has confirmed the date as the 6th of Ṣafar from the mother of Sayyid Muḥammad Ya'qūb, nephew of Sayyid Aḥmad, whom he personally contacted during his travel to that area. Makhzan-i Aḥmadī mentions only the month of Ṣafar, 1201 A.H.(p. 12). Thānēsarī in his Tawārīkh-i 'Ajībah Mawsūm bih Sawānih Aḥmadī (hereinafter referred to as Sawānih , Delhi, 1309/1891, p. 4), mentions the first of Muḥarram, 1201 A.H. But he does not refer to any source of information. Thānēsarī's date has been accepted by many later writers(cf. Ikrām, Mawj-i Kawthar, p. 7). Mihr, however, criticising the apologetic tendency of Thānēsarī, says that the greatness of Sayyid Aḥmad was not due to his being born on a particular day, such as the first day of the thirteenth century of the Islāmic era, rather, his activities made him great. Mihr also rejects the idea of those who consider Sayyid Aḥmad's birth on the first day of the thirteenth century as one of the proofs of his being a regenerator(Mujaddid) (cf. Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd, [hereinafter referred to as Sayyid Aḥmad] Lahore, 1954, pp. 56—57).

For converting dates, we follow: Lt. Col Sir Wolseley Haig, Comparative Tables of Muḥammadan and Christian Dates, Lahore, n.d.

- 3 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 27; Thānēsarī, Sawānih, pp.4—5.

- 4 Sayyid Qutb-ud-Dīn Muḥammad(d. 627/1230) was the first person, in the ancestry of Sayyid Aḥmad, to come to India with a band of disciples. Some writers inform us that Sultān Iltutmish appointed him as Shaykh-ul-Islām in Delhi(cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 31; Raḥmān 'Alī, Tadhkirah 'Ulamā'-i Hind[hereinafter referred to as Tadhkirah], p. 389). It is also related that Sayyid Qutb-ud-Dīn was a great saint, and it was in his honour that Iltutmish constructed the famous thirteenth-century Qutb Minār near Delhi(cf. A. Schimmel, Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious ideas of Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl [hereinafter referred to as Gabriel's Wing], Leiden, 1963, p. 3). But some historians maintain that it was constructed in honour of Qutb-ud-Dīn Aybak, the first Sultān of the Delhi Sultānate.
- 5 For a detailed life history of Sayyid 'Ilmulāh see Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 48—58; Mirzā Muḥammad Akhtar Dihlawī, Tadhkirah Awliyā'-i Hind-o-Pakistan, Lahore, 1957, pp. 432—433.

Shaykh Adam Bannurī(d. 1053/1643) was one of the principal disciples of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī(cf. Dihlawī, Tadhkirah Awliyā'-i Hind-o-Pakistan, pp. 427—428).

- 6 Muḥammad Miyān says that the Dā'irah-i 'Ilmulāh of Rā'ē Barēlī became one of the centres of intellectual activities initiated by Shāh Walīyullāh(cf. 'Ulamā'-i Hind kā Shāndār Mādī, Delhi, 1957, I, 34).

- 7 Sayyid Abū Sa'īd, maternal grandfather of Sayyid Aḥmad, had spiritual guidance from Shāh Walīyullāh and finally received the patent of spiritual authority, which entitles the receiver to enlist disciples (khilāfat kā manṣab); Sayyid Muḥammad Nu'mān, an uncle of Sayyid Aḥmad, gave bay'at to Shāh Walīyullāh; and finally, before Sayyid Aḥmad himself, his elder brother, Sayyid Ishāq, was in the circle of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, the two sons of Shāh Walīyullāh (cf. Abu'l Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī, Sīrat-i Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd [hereinafter referred to as Sīrat], 3d ed.; Lucknow, 1368/1948, I, 59—60; Maḥmūd Ḥusayn, "Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd", A History of the Freedom Movement [hereinafter referred to as Freedom Movement], Karachi, 1957, I, 558—559).
- 8 Aslam Ṣiddīqī, "Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd", Islāmīc Culture, XIX(1945), 124.
- 9 Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, Agra, 1299/1882, p. 12, quoted in Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 57.
- 10 See Sawānīḥ, pp. 5—6.
- 11 Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī (ed.), Arwāḥ Thalāthah or Amīrur rawāyat, 3d ed.; Saharanpur, 1370/1950, p. 126.
- 12 Thānēsarī and Nadwī write that in his boyhood, Sayyid Aḥmad was very much interested in martial activities. He used to divide his game-mates into imaginary (fardī) forces, namely, "army of Islām" and "army of infidels" ,

and then carry out sectional attacks with extreme enthusiasm(cf. Sawānīh, p. 6; Sīrat, 70). The writers who put stress on the second phase of Sayyid Ahmad's movement, argue that the martial spirit was in the veins of Sayyid Ahmad from his boyhood and that he unconsciously nourished it more and more through his sporting activities(cf. Sīrat, 70).

- 13 Cf. Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī, p. 12, quoted in Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 62. For example, according to the Qur'ān, if a Muslim is on journey or sick, he is exempted from obligatory fasting during the month of Ramādān, and permitted to fast at a later time. In the case of Sayyid Ahmad, he is reported not to have availed himself of this permission, rather he acted on the obligation. 'Azīmat and Rukḥṣat may also be translated as "regular" and "irregular" actions(cf. 'Abdur Raḥīm, The Principles of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence, London, 1911, p. 130).
- 14 See Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī, p. 12, cited by Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 62.
- 15 Cf. Thānēsari, Sawānīh, p. 6.
- 16 See Makhzan-i Ahmadi, p. 12, cited by Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 61-62.
- 17 Yūsuf Ḥusayn Khān, "Sūfīsm in India", Islāmic Culture, XXX(1956), 252.
- 18 No exact date of Sayyid Ahmad's departure from Rā'e Barēlī is given. All the dates given by different authors about his stay at Lucknow and his arrival at

Delhi are confusing and contradictory (cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, n. 1, pp. 63—64). In such a situation, we prefer to accept a probable date.

- 19 Cf. Sayyid Muhammad 'Alī, Makhzan-i Ahmadī, pp. 14—15, cited by Hadwī, Sīrat, 74; Thānēsari, Sawānih, pp. 7—8; Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 63.
- 20 Makhzan-i Ahmadī, p. 14, cited by Thānēsari, Sawānih, p. 7.
- 21 Makhzan-i Ahmadī, p. 14, cited by Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 66.
- 22 Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 66.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 See Sīrat, 71. Tahajjud prayer is a kind of nafl (supere-rogatory) prayer performed at night, generally beginning from mid-night to fajr (early morning) prayer, after a short sleep. But some Ṣūfīs, who are wont to spend awake for the whole night in devotion, say tahajjud prayer throughout the night after a nap in the early evening. Night-sleep is a pre-requisite for the tahajjud prayer. Tahajjud and dhikr are, however, not usually performed by ordinary Muslims. It is only the mystics who scrupulously performed these rituals.

CHAP. IV

- 1 Mirzā Hayrat Dildawī writes that when Sayyid Ahmad met an Amīr, the first question put to him by the Amīr was, whether he was a Mārijī or 'Alīte Shī'ah; Sayyid

Aḥmad heard these words for the first time in his life. But the Amīr hoped that the innocent boy would become a Shī'ah(cf. Ḥayāt-i Tayyibah, Lahore, n.d. pp. 484—85). He writes that in the Shī'ah system, cursing of the first three Caliphs of Islām was regarded as a matter of religious rite which leads to salvation. One day Sayyid Aḥmad discussed this matter with a Shī'ah boy who behaved unpolitely, and this led to a physical confrontation(cf. Ḥayāt-i Tayyibah, pp. 486—487). Dihlawī, of course, does not mention his source of information.

- 2 Ḥayrat Dihlawī writes that Sayyid Aḥmad was given a horse and some money by a certain old man, who was his father's friend. But when he reached Kānpūr, on his way to Delhi, he met four destitute persons to whom he gave the horse and the whole amount of money(cf. Ḥayāt-i Tayyibah, p. 490). This report of generosity on the part of Sayyid Aḥmad may be reliable. But the question remains, why did he go to Kānpūr, which is situated farther south-west of Lucknow, when he intended to go to Delhi which is situated in the opposite direction, that is, north-west of Lucknow?

In another story, Dihlawī says that on his way, Sayyid Aḥmad carried an old man on his shoulder for thirteen miles and ultimately took him to the old man's house(cf. Ḥayāt-i Tayyibah, p. 490).

We know that Sayyid Aḥmad tried to render his service to the people but the stories of his benevolent acts should be considered in terms of possibility and his capacity. Stories of this kind seem to be merely laudatory.

Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī relates the following story: Sayyid Aḥmad left for Delhi without informing any one. After four days his friends received information from a man that he saw a gentleman carrying a large bowl of gūr (a sweetening, used as a substitute for sugar in India and Pakistan) for a sepoy. On enquiry, the sepoy told the man that in fact, he had engaged a labourer to carry it. But this gentleman (Sayyid Aḥmad) seeing the miserable condition of the labourer in carrying the bowl, asked him (sepoy) to release that labourer paying him the remuneration, and he himself (Sayyid Aḥmad) took the bowl on his shoulder (cf. Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, Agra, 1299/1882, p. 14, quoted in Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 67; Nadwī, Sīrat, 75—76). Hearing this story every one realized that it was Sayyid Aḥmad.

3 A. 'Alī Thānwī (ed.), Saharanpūr, 3d ed.; 1370/1950, pp. 122-123.

4 Tadhkirah, Lahore, n.d. pp. 260—261.

5 Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 70.

6 Ibid.

7 Mawlānā 'Abdul Qādir was the younger brother of Shāh

‘Abdul ‘Azīz. For his brief life history see Aḥmān ‘Alī, Tadhkirah, pp. 315—16.

For information about Akbarābādī Mosque, see Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Āthār al-Ṣanādīd, 4th ed.; Delhi, 1965, pp. 280—281, 284—287.

- 8 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 58, 71, 73; Arwāḥ Thalāthah, p. 126; Khān, Āthār al-Ṣanādīd, p. 491; Maḥmūd Ḥusayn, Freedom Movement, 559; Dihlawī, Ḥayāt-i Tayyibah, p. 252; Nadwī, Sīrat, 78.
- 9 See Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 58; Nadwī, Sīrat, 82.
- 10 In the name of Maktubāt-i Sayyid Aḥmad, his letters are preserved in the British Museum: MS. Or. 6635. These are political letters written by Sayyid Aḥmad or sometimes written by Shāh Ismā‘īl on behalf of Sayyid Aḥmad, during the second phase of his movement. Of these, sixty letters have been reproduced by Thānēsarī at the end of his Sawāniḥ.
- 11 For the definitions of the terms ‘ilm and ‘ālin, and for their technical and literal meanings see T.P. Hughes, A Dictionary of Islām, London, 1895, pp. 13—14; D.B. Macdonald, “Ulamā”, Encyclopaedia of Islām, London, 1913, IV, 994; ... “‘ilm”, Encyclop. Islām, II, 469—470; T.W. Arnold, The Caliphate, Oxford, 1924, pp. 14—15, 17, 197—199, 200; Mushir-ul-Ḥaq, “Religion and Politics in India(1857—1947)”, (a Ph. D. thesis), p. 1.

- 12 Sayyid Ja'far 'Alī Naqwī, "Tārikh-i Aḥmadīyah", MS., p. 54, cited by Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 74.
- 13 Amīr Shāh Khān, in Arwāḥ Thalāthah, p. 125.
- 14 Khān, Āthār al-Sanādīd, p. 491.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Cf. Thānēsari, Sawānih, pp. 15—16.
- 17 Ibid., p. 11; Khān, Āthār al-Sanādīd, p. 492.
- 18 "Introduction" to A.J. Arberry's An Introduction to the History of Sūfism, London, 1942, p. xiii.
- 19 Ibid., pp. xiii—xiv.
- 20 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 76, citing Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, pp. 18—19; "Waḡā'i' Aḥmadī", MS., p. 6; Thānēsari, Sawānih, p. 11.
- 21 See Nadwī, Sīrat, 79; Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 76—77, citing Makhzan-i Aḥmadī and "Waḡā'i' Aḥmadī"; Thānēsari, Sawānih, p. 11.
- 22 Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 78, citing Makhzan-i Aḥmadī and "Waḡā'i' Aḥmadī".
- 23 Wasāyā al-Wazirī, pt. 1, p. 256, quoted in Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 78.
- 24 See Thānēsari, Sawānih, pp. 13—14. He relates with reference to Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, that Sayyid Aḥmad saw a number of visions. In one of them the Prophet and Abū Bakr appeared to him and instructed him for devotions on the night of the 27th of Ramādān.

It may be noted here that the question of dreams

is a common phenomenon with all Muslim religious figures in every age. Although they may not be easily understood by the general run of the people, the stories of dreams can be found in abundance in Ṣūfī literature,

According to Islāmic tradition, the night of 27th of Ramadān is called Shabb-i Qadr or Laylat-ul-Qadr (cf. Qur'ān, S: 97), the night of power. The Qur'ān says that on that particular night God revealed the holy Qur'ān. Since the whole Qur'ān was not revealed to Prophet Muḥammad on a single occasion, rather it was revealed to him part by part or verse after verse during the 23 years of his prophetic life, the Islāmic tradition says that on the Laylat-ul-Qadr the whole Qur'ān was sent down from the "Preserved Tablet" (lawḥi mahfūz) to the world sky, whence it was revealed to Muḥammad in course of his 23 years of prophetic mission according to necessities and circumstances. The Qur'ān, however, does not indicate any particular night naming as Laylat-ul-Qadr. Islāmic tradition developed the theory that any uneven night after the 20th of Ramadān can be Laylat-ul-Qadr. But the majority Muslim theologians regard 27th of Ramadān as the Laylat-ul-Qadr, a calculation based on the numbers of letters in the word.

In addition, the Qur'ān says that on that particular night the angels and the spirit(rūḥ) come down to the

world with the permission of God, with peace for the creatures. According to Islāmic tradition, the whole universe falls in prostration to God, as a mark of complete submission to Him. This event, according to Muslim tradition, can be seen only by a few elects of God whose inner vision has reached the stage of perfection and who have established a relationship of nearness with God. The generality of people cannot witness this event with their external sight. During the last fourteen hundred years of Islāmic faith, many a divinely pious soul has claimed to have witnessed this event. Any way, this is purely a Sūfī tradition. Sayyid Aḥmad is reported to have laid claim to witnessing this event, and his pīr, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, believed it and said that that night, with the grace of God, Sayyid Aḥmad had reached his goal (cf. Thānēsari, Sawānih, p. 13; also see Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 79, citing Makhzan-i Aḥmadī, p. 23).

- 25 Cf. Thānēsari, Sawānih, pp. 11—12; Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 77—78, quoting Makhzan-i Aḥmadī and "Waqā'i' Aḥmadī"; Ismā'īl, Ṣirāt-i Mustadīm, pp. 368—369.
- 26 See Dihlawī, Hayāt-i Tayyibah, p. 489.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid., p. 499.
- 30 For a brief sketch of the life of Amīr Khān, consult

- W.W. Hunter, A Brief History of the Indian Peoples, 24th ed.; Oxford, 1907, pp. 202—203; Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 86—89.
- 31 Cf. Maḥmūd Ḥusayn, Freedom Movement, 560.
- 32 Cf. Hayāt-i Tayyibah, p. 501; Sawānih, p. 16; Sīrat, .86.
- 33 See Shāh Waliyullāh, p. 83; Moslem Nationalism, p. 154.
- 34 For the detail Fatwā, see Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Fatāwā 'Azīzī, Delhi, 1904, pp. 16—17, 185.
- 35 Cf. Sindhī, Shāh Waliyullāh, p. 64.
- 36 See Mushir-ul-Ḥaqq, "Indian Muslims Attitude to the British in the Early Nineteenth Century"(an M.A. thesis), pp. 38—64.
- 37 Sayyid Ahmad, p. 84.
- 38 Ibid., pp. 84—85.
- 39 "Waqā'i' Ahmadī", p. 22, quoted in Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 84.
- 40 Hunter gives an account of Amīr Khān's life up to the treaty of 1817(cf. History of the Indian Peoples, pp. 202—203) but there is no mention of Sayyid Ahmad either in connection with any plan to wage a war against the British or the Sikhs, or the British-Amīr Khān peace treaty. Sayyid Ahmad figured most prominently, however, in Hunter's earlier work, The Indian Musalmans (1871).
- 41 Cf. Freedom Movement, 560.
- 42 Dihlawī writes with certainty that Sayyid Ahmad joined Amīr Khān's service in Jamādī al-Thānī, 1224 A.H.(cf. Hayāt-i Tayyibah, p. 501). Mihr says that, in some

place in India, Sayyid Ibrāhīm died on the 4th of Shawwāl, 1224/12th of Nov., 1809. But there is no definite record of his death. However, it seems certain that Sayyid Aḥmad arrived at Malwā in late 1809 and joined Amīr Khān's service in early 1810 while Sayyid Ibrāhīm was still alive.

- 43 See Nadwī, Sīrat, 86.
- 44 Freedom Movement, 560.
- 45 Cf. Sawānīh, pp. 18—19; Ḥayāt-i Tayyibah, pp. 505—506. They say that Sayyid Aḥmad persuaded Amīr Khān to sign the treaty.
- 46 Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 108—109; Sīrat, 87—88.
- 47 See Shāh Walīyullāh, p. 83; Hindustān kī Pahlī Islāmī Tahrik, Rawalpindī, 1368/1948, p. 34.
- 48 "Waḡā'ī 'Aḥmadī", p. 31, cited by Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 109. The Urdū text is following:
yeh khāksār sarā wā inkisār ḥadrat kī oadam būsī min
'anoarib ḥādir hū tā ha'e- yihān lashkar kā kār khānah
darham barham hū giyā- Nawāb Sāhib farangī se mil
gi- ab yihān rahni kī kū'ī sūrat nihī.
- 49 Freedom Movement, 561.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid.

CHAP. V

- 1 Shāh Walīyullāh, p. 81.

- 2 See Moslem Nationalism, p. 159.
- 3 Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 389.
- 4 Ibid., p. 390.
- 5 Cf. Mushir-ul-Ḥaqq, "Indian Muslims Attitude to the British in the Early Nineteenth Century", pp. 59, 60, 108. There were many 'ulamā' who accepted service under the Company Government, e.g., Mawlānā Fazl-i Ḥaqq Khayrābādī, Muftī Ṣadrud-dīn Āzurdah, Mawlānā Mamlūk 'Alī, Mawlawī 'Abdul Qādir Rāmpūrī and Mawlānā Fazl-i Imām Khayrābādī. For Muslim cooperation with the Company Government (see chap. iv, "Toleration and Friendliness", pp. 65—83, passim).
- 6 Muḥammad Yasīn, Studies: Historical and Cultural, Jammu, 1964, pp. 154—155.
- 7 Friedman, "Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī", p. 175.
- 8 Ibid., p. 176. See "Sirhindī" in the Tadhkirah of Abūl Kalām Āzād, Lahore, n.d. pp. 162 ff.
- 9 K.A. Nizāmī, "Shāh walīullāh" (His work in the Political Field), Freedom Movement, 539.
- 10 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 290—291.
- 11 See ibid., pp. 113—114; Nadwī, Sīrat, 89.
- 12 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 115—117.
- 13 Freedom Movement, 562. Nadwī says that it was miraculous that these personalities of the house of walīyullāh, who are considered second only to Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz in knowledge and piety, should be so quickly captivated

by the religious quality of Sayyid Ahmad (cf. Sīrat, 89).

14 Hunter, The Indian Musalmans, p. 52.

15 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 124.

Mihr says that at least twenty persons accompanied him, of whom the names of important ones have been mentioned. As to the date of tour, Mihr mentions November, 1818, to May, 1819, i.e., about seven months.

16 Mushir-ul-Haq, "Indian Muslims Attitude to the British", p. 97.

17 Fatāwā 'Azizī (Urdū), Delhi, 1904, II, 191.

18 Muḥammad 'Alī, Lakhzan-i Ahmādī, p. 39, cited by Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 123.

19 Cf. I.H. Qureshī, The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent, The Hague, 1962, n. 13, p. 197, citing Abū Yahyā Imām Khān Nūshahrawī, Tarājīm 'Ulamā'-i Nadīth-i Hind, Delhi, 1938, I, 87.

20 Sayyid Ahmad, p. 133.

21 Studies in Islāmic Culture in the Indian Environment (hereinafter referred to as Studies in Islamic Culture), Oxford, 1964, p. 211.

22 Cf. ibid., pp. 148—152, 161, 211; Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, pp. 10—19.

23 For a detailed description of the tour see Nadwī, Sīrat, 91 ff; Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 123—127.

24 Cf. Ikram, Mawj-i Kawthar, p. 11.

25 Sayyid Ahmad, p. 127.

26 Cf. ibid., pp. 130—131.

- 27 Mihr, Jamā'at-i Mujāhidīn, p. 221; Thānēsarī, Sawānih,
p. 29.
- 28 Cf. Thānēsarī, Sawānih, p. 23; Maḥmūd Ḥusayn,
Freedom Movement, 572.
- 29 Cf. Kawī-i Kawthar, p. 12.
- 30 Art. "Ṭarīqa", London, 1943, IV, 670.
- 31 Rushir-ul-Ḥaq, "Indian Muslims Attitude to the British",
p. 98.
- 32 Cf. D.S. Margoliouth, "Mabḥabīya", Encyclopaedia of
Islām, London, 1934, IV, 1086—1090.
- 33 Schimmel, Gabriel's Wing, p. 15.
For "Tijānīya" order see D.S. Margoliouth, Encyclopaedia
of Islām, London, 1934, IV, 745—747.
- 34 For the Sanūsī Movement see M.F. Shukrī, as-Sanūsīyah
Dīn wa Dawlah, Cairo, 1948, pp. 11 ff; M.A. Zisdeh,
Sanusiyyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islām,
Leiden, 1958, pp. 35 ff.
- 35 Fazlur Raḥmān, Islām, London, 1966, pp. 205—206.
- 36 Ibid., p. 207.
- 37 Khutbāt-i Sir Sayyid, Badā'un, 1931, 55, quoted by
Fazlur Raḥmān, Islām, pp. 216—217.
- 38 Fazlur Raḥmān, Islām, p. 209.
- 39 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 284.
- 40 Cf. Modern Islām in India, Lahore, 1946, p. 14.
- 41 Sindhi, Shāh Waliyullāh, p. 96.
- 42 Moslem Nationalism, p. 161.
- 43 For a detailed description of this tour(excluding

Lucknow), see Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 154—162. Makhzan-i Ahmadī mentions that a number of invitations reached Sayyid Ahmad, especially those from Allāhābād.

44 Cf. Nadwī, Sīrat, 112; Nadwī, Mas'ūd 'Ālam, Hindustān kī Pahlī Islāmī Tahrīk, p. 35.

45 See Nadwī, Sīrat, 115.

46 For example, Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz once had a pain in his toe. He read in a book that as a cure for such a pain one should take the hair of a child more than forty days and less than six months old and tie it at the affected spot. He did so and was cured.

He advised persons afflicted with love to go to a stable for mules, take off their clothes and roll about on the ground till the whole body was covered with dust (cf. Bashīr-ud-Dīn Ṣiddīqī [ed.], Malfūzāt-i Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Meerut, p. 34, quoted by Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 508).

47 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 144—145.

48 Cf. Sīrat, 117—118, citing "Waqā'i'", p. 185.

49 Sayyid Ahmad is reported to have caused a treatise to be written in Persian on the remarriage of widows.

Mihr informs us that he has a copy of it in his possession (cf. Sayyid Ahmad, n. 1, p. 148).

50 See Maḥmūd Ḥusayn, Freedom Movement, 569.

51 Maṣīrābād town (qasbah) was the original dwelling place of Shāh 'Ilmulāh. Many relatives of Sayyid Ahmad were

settled there. His first wife, Sayyidah Ṣaharah, also hailed from Naṣīrābād. Formerly the population of Naṣīrābād were all Sunni Muslims. From the time it came under the Nawāb of Awādh, Shī'ism also spread there. Mawlānā Dildār 'Alī was born there in 1166 A.H.

52 Cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, p. 153.

53 Mihr has quoted the letter from Makhzan-i Ahmadī, p. 52. It reads: "The fame of your khutbah and your name has spread everywhere. If you oblige the people of Lucknow, in general, and me [Mu'tamid-ud-Dawlah] in particular, who is anxious to see you, by paying a visit, it would be an act of your kindness and would not be far from cementing a brotherly and friendly relationship" (Sayyid Ahmad, p. 163).

54 See ibid., p. 170.

55 Ḥāfeez Mālik, Moslem Nationalism, pp. 161—162.

56 Cf. ibid., p. 163.

57 Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 240. Nawlawī Raḥmān 'Alī describes Mawlānā Sulṭānpūrī as a highly learned 'Ālim and Fādil of his time. He was the author of a number of works on fiqh, Arabic Literature, and history, of which Asmā' al-Anbiyā' and Sharīḥ Shamā'il al-Nabī are worth mentioning. Emperor Humayun is reported to have conferred on him the titles of Makhdum al-Mulk and Shaykh-ul-Islām. Raḥmān 'Alī says further that the Nawlawī had amassed so much wealth during Akbar's

reign that after his(Sultānpūrī) death(1582) Rs. three crores(30 million) were found in his custody(cf. Tadhkirah, pp. 264—265). But Raḥmān 'Alī does not mention Sultānpūrī's fatwā on the non-obligation of the Hajj. Nadwī mentions the name of Mawlawī Yād 'Alī of Garh who had declared that the Hajj was prohibited for the Indian Muslims(cf. Sīrat, 186).

58 See Nadwī, Sīrat, 171—172.

59 Mihr,,Sayyid Ahmad, p. 183, citing "Waqā'i'", p. 217.

60 On their way to the Hajj, the party halted at Dalmū', where Sayyid Ahmad delivered a very illuminating lecture. The general theme of the khutbah was on brotherly feeling among his disciples, equality in all matters, cooperation — one for all and all for one —, patience and tolerance, Finally, he asked his disciples to have firm belief in God's ability to provide them with the comforts of life(cf. Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 190—193).

61 For different amounts Sayyid Ahmad paid towards the expenses of the whole party see(Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 220—223, 241). The whole amount spent was about one hundred thousand rupees. On his return home, about ten thousand rupees were left in the Baytul Māl, which he founded on the eve of the journey to Hajj from Rā'ē Barēlī.

62 For details on the journey from Rā'ē Barēlī to Calcutta, see(Nadwī, Sīrat, 177 ff; Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 187—211).

- 63 Hunter, The Indian Musalmans, p. 282.
- 64 Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī, Muslims in India, Eng. trans. Asif Kidwāī, Lucknow, 1960, p. 51.
- 65 See Nadwī, Sīrat, 232—233, citing Makhzan-i Ahmadi, p. 75.
- 66 Cf. Nadwi, Sīrat, 234.
- 67 No biographer of Sayyid Ahmad mentions Titūmīr's name in the list of Sayyid Ahmad's disciples. Hunter says that Sayyid Ahmad met him at Mecca (cf. Indian Musalmans, n. 1, p. 37). Bārī suggests Calcutta as their meeting place, which appears nearer to the truth (cf. "The Reform Movement in Bengal", Freedom Movement, 550).
- 68 Ḥāfeeẓ Mālik, Moslem Nationalism, p. 163.
- 69 Nadwī, Muslims in India, p. 46.
- 70 Cf. Nadwī, Sīrat, 92, 109—110; Mihr, Sayyid Ahmad, pp. 125, 287—288.
- 71 Sayyid Ja'far 'Alī Naqwī, "Manẓūrah al-Sa'dah fī Ahwāl al-Ghuzah wa al-Shuhadā" popularly titled "Tārikh-i Ahmadiyah" (MS. Persian), quoted by Nadwī, Sīrat, 166.
- 72 "Waḡā'i'", quoted by Nadwī, Sīrat, 194.

Mihr records a conversation between Sayyid Ahmad and a certain 'Abdul Bāqī Khān Qandahārī who is reported to have objected to Sayyid Ahmad's keeping arms with him. Sayyid Ahmad is said to have defended his position by saying that keeping arms was the sign of God's gift with which He endowed His prophets for waging jihād, especially our Prophet, with the help of arms,

suppressed all unbelievers and spread Islām(cf. Sayyid Ahmad, p. 175).

CFAP. VI

- 1 Indian Musalmans, p. 45.
- 2 Fanciful structures representing the mausoleum of Imām Husayn, carried in procession during Muharram celebration by the Shī'ahs. The celebration is designed in order to lament the martyrdom of Husayn, son of 'Alī, the fourth Caliph of Islām, who was killed by the Umayyade army on the battlefield of Karbalā in 681 A.H.
- 3 Nadwī, Sīrat, 184, quoted by Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, pp. 396—397.
- 4 Trans. Hashmat 'Alī, "Support of Faith", pp. 1—2.
- 5 Cf. Lahore, 1948, pp. 25—28, 51—52.
- 6 Studies in Islāmic Culture, pp. 212—213.
- 7 Modern Islām in India, p. 11; also consult Sh. 'Ināyat-ullāh, "Sayyid Ahmad Brelevī", Encyclopaedia of Islām, new ed.; London, 1960, I, 282.
- 8 'Azīz Ahmad, "Political and Religious Ideas of Shāh Wali Ullāh of Delhi", Muslim World, LII, No. I(1962), 30; also see Abūl 'Alā Mawdūdī, Tajdīd wa Ihya'-i Dīn, Lahore, 1955, pp. 125—126.
- 9 'Azīz Ahmad, Studies in Islāmic Culture, p. 211.

10 P. 156.

11 Ismā'īl, Tacwīyat-ul-Īmān, p. 65.

12 Ibid., pp. 352—353.

13 Modern Islām in India, p. 161.

14 According to/^{an} account, that on his way to the North-West Frontier to fight the Sikhs, Sayyid Aḥmad halted at Gawalior for a few days and enjoyed the hospitality of Dawlat Rāo Hindīyah, the Marhatta king. His Prime Minister and brother-in-law, Rājā Hindo Rāo, rendered service to Sayyid Aḥmad and his followers like an ordinary disciple of a pīr. It is also reported that Hindo Rāo presented to Sayyid Aḥmad precious gifts. The Queen is reported to have expressed her desire to provide Sayyid Aḥmad with arms and ammunitions should he stay at Gawalior for a year or so. At his meeting with the King Hindīyah, the latter expressed his desire to receive Ṣūfī tawajjuh from Sayyid Aḥmad which he declined to give(cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, pp. 287—288).

During his actual fighting against the Sikhs, Rājā Hindo Rāo was one of those who received letters from Sayyid Aḥmad for help and cooperation(cf. Mihr, Sayyid Aḥmad, p. 435).

15 'Abqāt, Ḥaydarābād, 1924, quoted by Sindhī, Shāh Waliyullāh, p. 46.

16 See Modern Islām in India, p. 161.

17 Cf. Freedom Movement, 568.

18 Hunter, Indian Musalmans, p. 44.

- 19 pp. 173—174; also see pp. 160—161.
- 20 Hunter, Indian Musalmans, p. 45.
- 21 p. 112.
- 22 p. 113.
- 23 pp. 123—124.
- 24 pp. 125—129.
- 25 p. 130.
- 26 Cf. Fazlur Raḥmān, Islām, 1966, pp. 196—211 passim.
- 27 Ibid., p. 203.
- 28 Ismāʿīl, pp. 51—52.
- 29 Cf. Ismāʿīl, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, pp. 152—157.
- 30 Ibid., pp. 203 ff.
- 31 Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 397.
- 32 Ibid., p. 396.
- 33 Ibid., p. 397.
- 34 Ibid., p. 396; also see p. 281.
- 35 Ibid., p. 277.
- 36 Ibid., p. 390.
- 37 Cf. Ismāʿīl, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, pp. 21—22.
- 38 Ibid., p. 102.
- 39 Ibid., p. 103.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid., pp. 103—104.
- 42 See Friedman, "Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī", pp. 47, 64.
- 43 Ismāʿīl, Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, pp. 34, 35.
- 44 Ibid., pp. 59, 64.

45 The doctrine of Wahdat al-Wajūd was formulated by Ibn al-‘Arabī. It was questioned in India for the first time by Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624), who enunciated the doctrine of Wahdat al-Shuhūd. For his ideas, consult (Maktubāt-i Imām Rabbānī [Persian], ed. Nūr Aḥmad, Amritsar, 1334 A.H., available in Urdū translation). Among secondary works, see (Burhān-ud-Dīn Aḥmad Fārūqī, The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhīd, Lahore, 1940). The recent work dealing with the question is Friedman's ("Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī", pp. 85 ff.). Shāh Waliyullāh attempted a synthesis of the two doctrines with the emphasis on the latter (see Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 280). A typical Ṣūfī composition of Shāh Waliyullāh is a treatise entitled, Faiṣlah-i Wahdat al-Wajūd wa Wahdat al-Shuhūd (Verdict on Wahdat al-Wajūd and Wahdat al-Shuhūd), in which he attempted a reconciliation of the two doctrines.

For Shāh Ismā‘īl's opinion on this question, see (‘Abcāt, pp. 65—90).

46 Freedom Movement, 573, citing Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, pp. 114—15.

47 Cf. Friedman, "Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī", pp. 72—75.

48 Consult S.M. Ikrām, "Shāh Waliyullāh", Freedom Movement, 499.

49 Cf. Fatāwā ‘Azīzī, 12, 18, 190; Kānpūr ed. n.d. I, 38—39.

50 Cf. Sirāt-i Mustaqīm, p. 144.

- 51 Ibid., p. 145.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid., p. 139.
- 54 Cf. ibid., pp. 18, 35, 59, 64.
- 55 Ibid., pp. 165—166.
- 56 Cf. Fazlur Raḥmān, Islām, p. 203; Ikrām, Mawj-i Kawthar, p. 42. On the point of non-conformism, Sayyid Aḥmad's movement differs from that of the Arabian Wahhābīs, because they were the followers of Ḥanbalī school.
- 57 See Fazlur Raḥmān, Islām, p. 205; also see Ikrām, Mawj-i Kawthar, pp. 45—46, 48—55.

The word āmīn is used in the muslim prayers after Sūrah Fātiḥah. The point at issue is whether it should be pronounced inaudibly or audibly. The question of rafʿ-i yadayn concerns the raising of the hands up to the ears not only at the beginning but also during the prayers. The Ahl-i Ḥadīth group says that āmīn should be pronounced loudly and the hands must be raised at certain other points during the prayers, besides at the beginning. In India and Pakistan these differences still persist between the Ahl-i Ḥadīth and the followers of the Ḥanafī school of muslim jurisprudence.

- 58 Consult Nadwī, Hindustān kī Pahlī Islāmī Tahrik, pp. 29-30.

Professor Hajeer describes an interesting story of the quarrel between the mucallidīn and the ghayr mucallidīn. He says that the sectarian zeal was widespread

throughout the country. Differences between the Shī'ahs and the Sunnīs became acute. "Even among the Sunnīs themselves there was bitter controversy between the Mucallids and the Chair Mucallids, which ranged over a long period ... In the proceedings of the court trying Maulwī Amīruddīn, a Wahhābī leader of Bengal, for conspiracy against the British government, it is recorded that the father of the accused, 'a broken down old man, upwards of seventy years of age ... who appears to have thrown himself into the movement with the zeal of a new convert', embraced his son when the sentence of transportation had been passed against him, 'My son', he cried out, 'never forsake Amīn and Raf'ī yadain. Keep firm in faith. It is not Christians and Jews who have destroyed you, but the Hanafīs'"(Indian Muslims, p. 398).

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